

DRAMATICS

An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

Vol. XXIII, No. 5

FEBRUARY, 1952

50c Per Copy



Scene from **The Hasty Heart**, a presentation of the Newport News, Va., High School (Thespian Troupe 122), Dorothy M. Crane, Director and Thespian Sponsor.

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GOOD WILL AMONG SCHOOLS

BY MILTON SHEFTER

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By PAUL MYERS

ACTING: ENERGY, COMMUNION, EMOTION

By JOHN W. HALLAUER

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(DRAMATICS is published by The National Thespian Society, an organization of teachers
and students devoted to the advancement of dramatic arts in the secondary schools)

MEMBER OF THE EDUCATIONAL PRESS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Address: Dramatics, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio

\$2.50 Per Year

Volume XXIII, No. 5

50c Per Copy

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One year subscription—Foreign	3.00
Canada and Newfoundland	2.75
Single Copy50
Back issues, per copy50

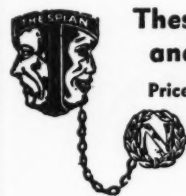
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DRAMATICS is published monthly (eight times)
during the school year at College Hill Station, Cin-
cinnati, Ohio, by The National Thespian Society,
College Hill Station, Cincinnati, Ohio. Date of pub-
lication: Oct. 1, Nov. 1, Dec. 1, Jan. 1, Feb. 1, Mar. 1,
April 1, and May 1. Blandford Jennings, National
Director; Doris Marshall, Assistant National Director;
Leon C. Miller, Secretary and Treasurer; Jean E.
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Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati,
Ohio. Entered as second class matter, September 15,
1935, at the post office at Cincinnati, Ohio, under
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In This Issue



"COME TO THE THEATRE," an article by James J. Zigerell of Wright Junior College, is a required reading assignment for both teacher and student. The methods used in his school may not be as a whole applicable to your school, but his ideas are sound. *Use them!*

TO you Thespians, who have been stung by the Theatre bug, M. David Samples in his article, *Theatre after Graduation*, answers, I am sure, a number of questions about continuing your activity in the dramatic arts after your high school days are over. He shows the many roads to travel; the choice of the route he leaves to you.

AFTER reading Milton Shefter's article about the inter-scholastic project recently completed by his Thespian Troupe 416, of which he is president, and Thespian Troupe 520, I immediately caught his enthusiasm for the exchanging of assembly programs of their respective schools. I agree with him that a tremendous amount of good can be done in bettering relations between two athletically rivaling schools by this project. Don't miss reading it.

AN original, unpublished play, *Cradle of Glory*, by Marie McNett of Williamstown, Mass., is Dr. Blank's choice for this issue's *Play of the Month*. It is about the boyhood days of Abe Lincoln, as he lived them in Indiana. For the March issue Dr. Blank is following through with that now world renowned play, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. Wise choices, both plays, especially in these days of world tension and national corruption.

PAUL MYERS continues his brief biographies of the players of today by featuring Grace George and Ethel Barrymore. John Hallauer stresses energy, communion and emotion so essential in good acting. Si Mills features Groucho Marx, and Kenn Carmichael continues relating the little known facts of the movie industry.

It's all good reading!

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I REMEMBER MAMA

THE BARRETTS OF WIMPOLE STREET

LIFE WITH MOTHER

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

YEARS AGO

RAMSHACKLE INN

LIFE WITH FATHER

DEAR RUTH

JENNY KISSED ME

MR. BARRY'S ETCHINGS

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HARVEY

MY SISTER EILEEN

MR. BARRY'S ETCHINGS

Comedy by Walter Bullock and Daniel Archer



This entertaining comedy was produced, with Lee Tracy in the lead, by Brock Pemberton, early in 1950. A carefree, fast-moving, somewhat fantastic comedy. Released at present in practically all territory in U. S. and Canada. 7 men, 6 women; 1 interior setting. Books, 85c. Fee, \$25 a performance.

Judson Barry, an attractive and thoroughly human fellow, is an artist. He is an enthusiastic etcher, and, simply as a pastime, he has made a marvelous imitation of the U. S. \$50 bill. The counterfeit — but he didn't like the word — was so perfect as to escape detection by everyone except the super-crook, "Fifty" Ferris, a woman who lives by passing counterfeits. Never for a moment would Barry think of doing anything dishonest, and it was only as a joke that he gave one of his "masterpieces" to Bud, a boy friend of his. The town where Barry lives has been in the hands of political jugglers, and it is on the rocks industrially. The crooks have a strong political organization, and all the worthy causes, hospitals, etc., are suffering. Barry realizes that unless something is done, his town will soon be completely at the mercy of grafters. So, out of the goodness of his heart, he distributes many of his counterfeit bills to the good causes so in need of money, including a political campaign to drive out the crooks. At once, the town responds to this and is on the way to moral recovery when "Fifty" Ferris, together with "Sawbuck" Sam, her side-kick, turn up, having got hold of the counterfeit Barry had given Bud. They make their way into Barry's home and propose a partnership whereby he shall supply the bills

and they will put them into circulation. Barry is shocked, and gets them in his power by suddenly turning on them a toy sub-machine gun which he has made for a little girl in the neighborhood. "Fifty" and "Sawbuck" are turned over to the police. However, this situation brings about the discovery that Barry has been circulating counterfeits. For the first time, Barry realizes that what he has done, while not in his eyes ethically dishonest, is dangerous and anti-social. Detectives and reporters, who have come up to Barry's town in order to write up the changes which Barry has brought about, are sympathetic toward Barry and try to intervene for a pardon. Barry rejects such a proposal but meantime, a wealthy movie executive offers Barry a huge sum for the story of his life. The only condition on which Barry will accept is that the magnate give him the equivalent in good money of the \$50 counterfeits that have been distributed, plus 10%. Barry will then offer for all counterfeits returned to him good money plus a 10% bonus. So, all ends happily except for Barry's stipulation that whatever the legal penalty that may be imposed upon him, he will cheerfully accept it. As a matter of fact, he rather looks forward to a short jail term in peace and quiet.

Illustration by Jesse Spicer. Copyright, 1952, by Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

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As I See It . . .

IT'S IU IN '52

TROUPE No.1200 COMING UP!

With 38 secondary schools added to our roll during this school year, with 14 other schools pending, with inquiries about our Society reaching this office with almost every mail, this school year can be another banner year in the history of our Society. By the time you read this item, we hope Troupe No. 1200 will be assigned. To you sponsors in the field must go the credit for our continuous growth. Your promotional activity is best illustrated by this excerpt from a letter by Mrs. Marjorie H. Learn, Sponsor of Troupe 1100, Green Lake, Wisconsin:

"I am surprised more Wisconsin schools do not join our Society. We all plug for it on our tours with our play. It is a privilege and a great joy to our very drama-conscious youngsters in Green Lake. With most sincere wishes for the continued success of the National Thespian Society, and my personal appreciation of the valuable services it offers."

LEST WE FORGET

Next month is International Theatre Month! I hope all of our 1191 Thespian Troupes have made definite plans to observe this month of International brotherhood by exhibits, by the presentation of one-act plays in the school assemblies or by an evening performance of some play with an international theme. By this time each troupe has received the brochure, mailed from this office, which offers excellent suggestions.

Co-sponsoring International Theatre Month with UNESCO is the American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA), an organization chartered by the Congress of the United States. Your Society is a member of this organization. In preparation for the observing of International Theatre Month ANTA does the following chores: Addresses 2,500 envelopes for three different mailings; persuades outstanding theatre organizations, as your Society, to cooperate in such mailings; prepares all the material for the brochure which is then published by UNESCO; compiles play lists; prepares and reproduces the publicity packet; mails all the publicity packets along with UNESCO material to participating groups; and keeps records of participating groups. **Our hats are off to ANTA for a job well done.**

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"Since Troupe 972 received its charter, it has become one of the most active and important organizations in our school. The members have conducted themselves in such a way as to cause many students to want to become Thespians. I am very proud of the many members of the Troupe."—**Juanita Markham, Sponsor, Middlesboro, Kentucky, High School.**

AFTER GRADUATION, WHAT?

The answer to the question, "After graduation, how can I continue with theatre?" is found in this paragraph about the Repertoire Little Theatre, Toledo, Ohio: "Founded in 1933, the 'Rep' has produced to date 113 major productions with 762 performances during 19 consecutive seasons in a near-professional manner. It is one of few Little Theatres in the United States that owns its own theatre, has a Foundation Fund, and with over 2700 members operates profitably on only membership income without any angels or subsidy from any source. An office secretary is the only paid person on the staff." **How is your Community Theatre?**

AN ORCHID TO GLORIA

Although we do not encourage Theatre as a vocation, we feel that whenever one of our Thespians is on his way up the ladder of the professional theatre, mention should be made of his achievement. Thespian Gloria Krieger, a member of Troupe 124, Jefferson High School, Portland, Oregon, has recently signed a contract with the Columbia Motion Picture Studios after having suc-



Thespian Gloria Krieger
as "Peg o' My Heart."

cessfully passed her screen test. She also was chosen the Rose Festival Queen of Portland for 1951. Our sincere congratulations to Miss Krieger and also to Mrs. Melba Day Sparks, Thespian Sponsor, to whom I am sure Gloria is most grateful for giving her an opportunity to develop further her talent during her high school days.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID MOSES!

Miss Eva L. Robertson, Sponsor of Thespian Troupe 1106, Kendallville, Indiana, in thanking us for using her "Sleeping Beauty" picture on the December cover, mentioned that the original picture was taken by David Moses, a senior class boy of her school. She feels that his work is definitely professional and so do we, or his photograph would not have made the cover of your magazine.

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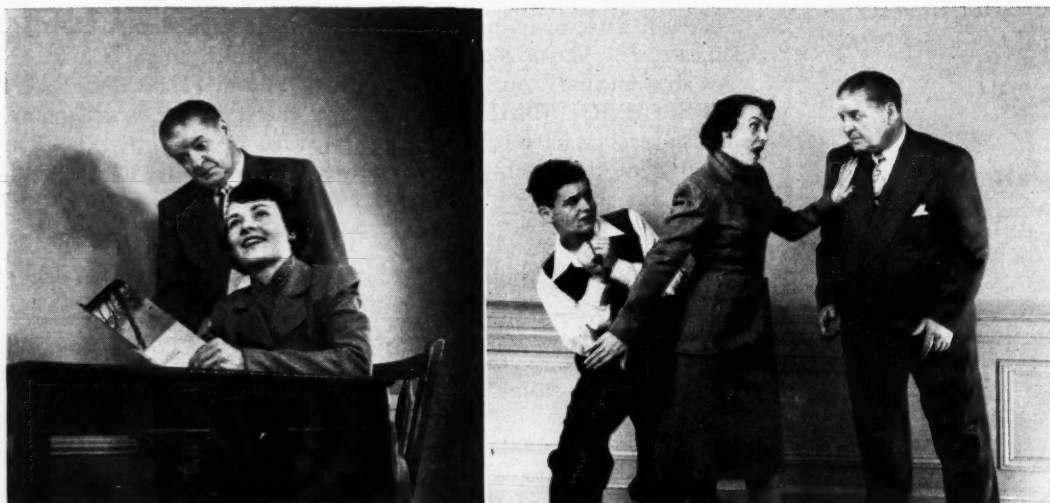
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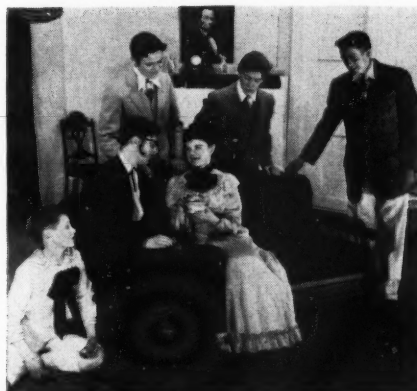
* See Annual Summary, page 19, October 1951 issue Dramatics Magazine.

COME to the THEATRE

By JAMES J. ZIGERELL

BEFORE suggesting methods of preparing students for the theatre, I feel that in a magazine read by high school students and dramatics teachers, I should say that I have no special training. I write as a layman and pretend to no special knowledge of the theatre. I am concerned here with suggesting sketchily ways in which the school can persuade students to use the theatre resources of the community. Whatever knowledge I have of the theatre comes from my experience as a theatre-goer and from my reading of literature of the stage. The preparation I speak of is the kind that can be given by any teacher of English.

The school in which I teach is in a metropolitan area. Although the Chicago theatre is not always particularly flourishing, there is a respectable amount of theatre to be explored and enjoyed by high school students. Unfortunately of course the legitimate theatres of this country center in metropolitan areas. Accordingly, the theatre resources of some communities are slim indeed. In some communities removed from the larger cities the secondary school itself must supply all non-professional theatre. As a matter of fact, school theatricals supply much of the theatrical experience of high school students in any part of the country and, as our experience at Wright leads us to believe, of junior college students as well. Nonetheless, the remarks I am going to make are based upon experience in a large city.



Life with Mother, a presentation of the Boulder, Colo., High School (Thespian Troupe 60), Ada Burton, Director.

There is no reason, however, why any community should not be able to make a resource of the theatre, provided of course that the dramatics group of the school does not confine itself to third-rate materials or to futile apings of trivial and popular Broadway hits. The important thing is that we try to introduce the student to the theatre. A bulletin board showing notices of plays, school-permitted ticket sales, alert teachers who urge their students to go to plays — these bring school and community together.

In every school, no matter what the community theatre situation is, all students are subjected to dramatic experience of a kind. They must at one time or another read and discuss a play, usually one of the "classics." This experience, the reading of literature of the stage, can serve very well as a jumping-off point for the kind of teaching I am about to describe. Most teachers, I am sure, have felt at one time or another the depression that often comes from the discussion of a play in the classroom. Think only of Shakespeare or Ibsen. How frustrating it is to face the indifference and yawns of a class presumably prepared to talk about Hamlet or Lear! Many teachers simply cannot stand up

to the fact that the language of Shakespeare is a distressing obstacle, and that the problems of Ibsen are hopelessly dated. Yet the same students who slept while *Hamlet* was read and discussed in the classroom felt a strange kind of excitement while Olivier sulked through *Hamlet* on the local movie screen.

The plain fact of the matter is that the schools do not prepare the student to enjoy drama. To put the matter another way, the schools do not induce the student to come to terms with an exciting cultural force in our society. In the institution in which I teach an attempt is being made in the general course in the Humanities to persuade the student to experience some of the forces of culture in his society. When we deal with the drama, we make it our business to get the student to spend an afternoon or an evening in the theatre.



Richard Feller and Betty Seiffert in a scene from *Little Women*, presented by the Highland Park, N. J., High School (Thespian Troupe 805), Gertrude Patterson, Director.

Undeniably in a city like Chicago it is fairly easy to get students to the theatre. What can be done in communities that are without a legitimate theatre? As I hinted before, the problem is not overwhelming. If a school has a dramatics group, the resources of the dramatics and literature departments or sections can be pooled. Plays to be performed — if they are worthwhile plays — can be studied by English classes. For that matter, discussion of a play in the English class may stimulate the students to want to see any play. Whatever theatrical resources the community has to offer should be brought to their attention.

At Wright the Humanities Department has taken upon itself the job of arousing student interest in the "live" theatre. The school of course has an excellent drama department. But our

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The curtain call of the Junior Class Play, *Pink Magic*, which had its high school premiere at Redondo Union High School, Redondo Beach, Calif. (Thespian Troupe 462), Aletha Browne, Director.



Reading, Pa., cast of *The Devil and Miss Appleby*, who journeyed to York, Pa. Mildred Hahn is Sponsor of Reading Thespians, Troupe 416.

TODAY with the sports world racked with scandal, particularly in all amateur athletics, the secondary schools of our country are at last beginning to realize that sportsmanship can be taught and inter-school relationships strengthened by extra-curricular activities other than athletics. Dramatics can play an important role in rebuilding better inter-school relations by adopting the exchange assembly programs as inaugurated by two of our Pennsylvania Thespian Troupes.

At the first Eastern Regional Conference held in York (April, 1950), representatives of William Penn Sr. High School of York, and the Reading Senior High School of Reading, expressed desire to inaugurate exchange assemblies. Through the cooperation of both principals, Mr. Earl A. Masters of Reading and Dr. E. A. Glatfelter of York, and the untiring efforts of Miss Margaretta Hallock and Miss Mildred Hahn, sponsors of Troupes 520 and 416 respectively, the final arrangements for this exchange were completed. Casts were picked for the two plays and the groups worked hard toward perfection.

On October 21 and 22 we Reading Thespians presented our play, *The Devil and Miss Appleby*, to our fellow students. The next day we journeyed to York to initiate the exchange assembly plan. Our delightful stay provided us with new experiences and acquaintances. We saw how different York High School was from ours; we attended a number of classes.

As a member of the Reading High School Sportsmanship Committee, I wondered how the students would react to us from a school which had humbled their football team. Our hosts treated us as guests and extended every courtesy to us. We were made to feel at home, and that really meant much

towards teaching good sportsmanship.

Our play was well received, and when we came out to offer the greetings of our school we couldn't talk for nearly five minutes due to the tremendous ovation. A group from West York, home of Thespian Troupe 773, attended the performance.

Then the second part of "Operation Exchange" came. The York group came to Reading to produce *Three's a Crowd* to our assembly. We hoped and prayed our students would give them the same hospitality that we had received. And they did; they accepted the York students and tried to make their stay pleasant. Social activities, like those in York, were arranged. Needless to say, we all had another memorable experience.

It was a dreary afternoon when our friends from York had to leave, a damp

GOOD WILL among SCHOOLS

By MILTON SHEFTER

afternoon, and there was sadness in our hearts. And yet, all of us made one vow. It wouldn't be "Good-bye," just "Be Seein' You."

Soon after Norristown High School communicated with us and expressed its desire for an exchange assembly. We were off again. Our hosts were the 4-A speech class under Miss Rebecca Price. (They have no Thespian Troupe.) Again we were graciously received. In February, Norristown will present an assembly for us, and all the students are eagerly awaiting it.

So you see, an idea, built up by much hard work and cooperation, soon blossomed into a wonderful inter-scholastic project toward strengthening relationships. Without the help of each and every person, this whole project could not have been made possible.

When we have the Second Eastern Regional Conference here in Reading in April, we hope to propagate this idea. We think it is a major step toward goodwill among schools. Besides that, new experiences and acquaintances are in store for the participants. I know, for I had one of the most delightful experiences of my life working on this project. "Music may charm the savage beast," but oh, what fun and good can be done with dramas — as an inter-scholastic project!



York, Pa., cast of *Three's a Crowd*, with Margaretta Hallock, Sponsor of Thespian Troupe 520, who journeyed to Reading, Pa.

THEATRE after GRADUATION

By M. DAVID SAMPLES

NEARING graduation from high school the hopeful young theatre-minded student invariably finds himself faced with the problem of selecting an institution for nurturing his talents. Frankly he faces a momentous decision. For upon that choice depends his future success or failure in theatre. The object of the notes that follow is to attempt to enlighten the seeker and make his quest an easier one.

There is one important question the student must ask himself before deciding upon theatre as a career, either professionally or academically: *What, if anything, do I have to contribute to theatre?* This is a brutal question, but it must be answered. Unless you are certain of your calling in theatre, stay out of it. One of Broadway's leading star's advice is: "If you want to go into theatre — DON'T!" The theatrical hopeful must be scrupulously honest with himself. For this business is without doubt the world's greatest gamble. Honesty with oneself therefore becomes a tremendous virtue and necessity. Your chances for success in the theatre are 1 to 1,000 against you. And the average income of Equity members (professional actors) is less than \$3,000 a year. That amount is a generous estimate at that. A select few actors and directors are doing all the work; the remainder are going hungry walking the streets of New York and Hollywood.

It is because of these facts that I usually discourage the would-be actor. Numerous students ask me the same old question: "Do you think I have anything to contribute?" And I answer: "I don't



Arsenic and Old Lace, presented by the Miami Edison High School (Thespian Troupe 8), Miami, Fla., Sophia Derbyshire, Director.

know; do you have anything to contribute?" Should I venture to say "Yes," they might fail; should I venture a "No," they just might succeed. Consequently I try merely to present the picture. If the would-be actor knows the chances, the likelihood of failure, and still goes on with determination, then that individual may well be on the road to achievement.

But there are too many stage-struck Johnnies whose eyes are blinded by questionable Hollywood starlight. There are too many students being lured by the hope for money that isn't there, that they will never make. There are too many who do not realize that there is a lean market for theatre people in America today. The drama schools and universities train hundreds of theatre people every year and for what? At this moment the greater number of them are clerking in stores or soda-jerking, waiting for a seasonal job opening with some summer stock company. It is honestly discouraging. But only through despair is hope born. Only when enough people become aware of the situation will action give way to results. Perhaps then a decent plan for decentralized theatre off Broadway will become a fact.

Let us say that the young hopeful has overlooked the praise of the local home town reviewer, has ignored the compli-

ments of his best friends, has questioned the approval of his family and still honestly believes he has something the public would be willing to pay to see. Having made this favorable analysis the hopeful asks: where now?

Before continuing, understand that in treating this matter briefly I am not making any distinction between educational and professional theatre, for actually there should be no difference anyway. Also I am treating all aspects of theatre as a whole, whether it be acting, directing, designing, or playwriting.

Where, indeed! In further limiting this discussion chiefly to the consideration of colleges and universities I must pass over summer stock and the so called professional schools lightly. Walter Prichard Eaton, Dean of the American Theatre, dismisses summer stock thus: "Summer stock is rugged, and not too good training — but it's all there is now." Yes! It is another regrettable truth that much summer stock is fraudulent, used to exploit the finances and energies of wide-eyed students who can expect nothing more than a walk-on before the season is done. Max Reinhardt said it: "There are many theatres but few geniuses." As for so-called professional schools: they usually advertise by listing a half dozen "stars" who once tread their boards. This method hardly guarantees a similar path for those who follow. Graduation certificates from these schools do not carry sufficient prestige to allow the holder to teach, should he happen to fail as a professional actor or theatre man.

Which brings us to the main consideration of selecting the college or university for theatre work. Every school publishes a catalogue of courses meant to attract and favorably impress the reader. Almost every recognized institution of higher learning lists speech and theatre, if not alone, then under the auspices of the English Department. For theatre is still a questionable academic pursuit in the eyes of some educators.

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Thespian Troupe 733, E. Alton-Wood River, Ill., High School's presentation of *Nine Girls*, Lu Parker, Director.

His Choice?



Dreams or realities? . . . College or a job?
A fiancée or a friend? . . . Choices for every

JUNE GRADUATE

HERE is the believable, the always intensely gripping story of a boy who loses himself—and almost his whole future—at one of the most important crossroads of his life. There is some sadness, yes. But the tear-touched moments are delightfully mingled with the irrepressible, exultant laughter of Youth embarked on a Great Adventure.

Bob Gardner—school hero, athletic star but low-mark scholar—might be any one of the thousands of boys who will graduate this June. Irene Davis, loyal and far-sighted, could be the nice girl in the next block. We've all met Agnes Wagner, the hanger-on, the successful schemer. These young people and their friends are as real as the Class Day picture. They are the high school seniors of today—they are *your* June Graduates of 1952.

Repeated requests from directors for a "significant" play with "something to say" are being satisfactorily answered by the "good theater" of **JUNE GRADUATE**. Editorially, the play speaks with maximum dramatic effect, well-defined issues and "sayable" dialogue. We are proud to present **JUNE GRADUATE**, in recognition of current play needs in the Educational Theater.

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JUNE GRADUATE

A Comedy-Drama by Jean Provence

ROW-PETERSON PLAYS

Evanston

Illinois



DRAMATICS

ACTING: ENERGY, COMMUNION, EMOTION

By JOHN W. HALLAUER

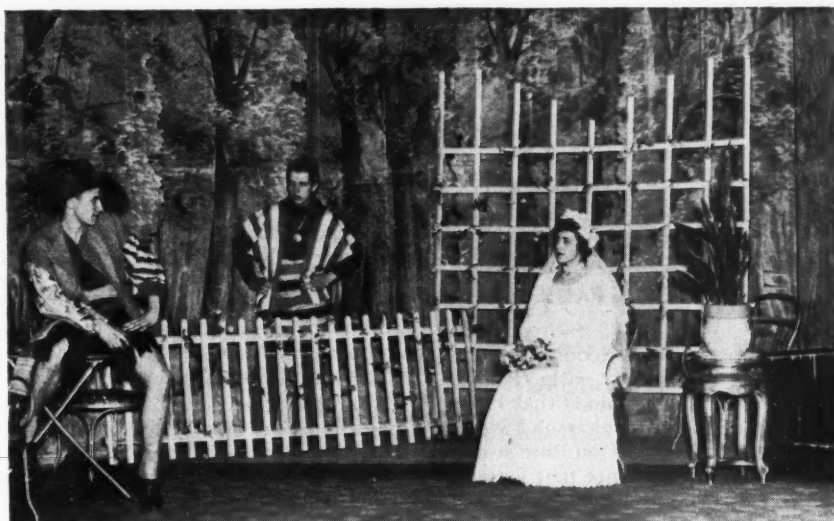
AFTER we have once established some understanding of the three basic acting principles: relaxation, motivation and concentration, we can move on to other acting problems. There are a great many of them of course, but this discussion is too limited in space to allow for the complete analysis of an acting technique. We can touch upon only three of the many possible additional acting problems—those of energy, communion and emotion. It is here that the amateur actor makes his most frequent errors, after he has partially mastered the use of relaxation, motivation and concentration.

Energy

There is nothing more deadly to a play than performances which are physically and vocally so weak that they never get beyond the footlights, or are upon so low a level that any variety in emphasis or force of activity is precluded. Yet how often we see a play performed in this way, with the characters all seeming tired, and the action, even at its peak, never becoming more than languid.

At first thought it would seem that actors who are concentrating and relaxing properly, so that the extra energy of the performance situation is correctly channeled, should have enough projection. But unfortunately this is seldom true. An actor may have a thorough grasp of his character. He may be well-motivated. He may be filled with genuine emotions. Even so, if he does not have additional energy beyond that which the character will have in real life and even beyond that of the performance situation, almost nothing is going to project to the audience. Amateur actors must become aware that stage action is of necessity larger than life, primarily in the much greater intensity and singleness of purpose with which all talking, acting, thinking and feeling are done upon the stage.

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Rehearsal scene from **Katharine and Petruchio**, presented by Thespian Troupe 580 of Central Catholic High School, Canton, Ohio. Sister M. Beatrice, H.H.M., Sponsor and Director.



Corkey Johns, Carole Jerome and Josephine Womack in a scene from **Our Hearts Were Young and Gay**, a production of Midwest City, Okla., High School (Thespian Troupe 101), Effie Carlisle, Director.



Jack Sargent, Betty Nichols, Dick Gilbert, Joyce Godwin and Pat Santry in **Special Guest**, presented by Ysleta, Texas, High School (Troupe 799), Roy Chambliss, Sponsor.

GRAND GALS

By PAUL MYERS

ONE of my fairly constant companions during my early theatre-going days complained that I was always interested in the character women in the play and not in the sweet, young ingenues. It was not that I didn't have an eye for the loveliness of the younger player. To use one of the very over-worked theatre words—it was just that the veteran players seemed to have far more "glamor" because of all the wonderful parts they had played and the great actors they had accompanied. These actors had played with Sir Henry Irving, Forbes-Robertson, Joseph Jefferson, John Drew, or Ellen Terry. Let us visit in this article some more of the "grand gals," who carry along the great traditions of the theatre into our day.

Two nights ago one of the greatest of these ladies opened in a new production, *The Constant Wife*. A fuller account of the production appears in my *Theatre on Broadway* in this issue of DRAMATICS. Grace George has been a star since 1898 when she appeared as Juliette in *The Turtle*. Her first stage appearance was in June, 1894, as one of the school-girls in *The New Boy*. The previous year she had graduated from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts.

The New Boy by Arthur Law was advertised as "a successor to *Charley's Aunt*." The reviewer for the NEW YORK SUN reported that "there was a riot of farce at the Standard Theatre last evening." The aisle-sitter for the NEW YORK MORNING JOURNAL felt that "*The New Boy* is certainly one of the funniest farce comedies ever brought to this country from England." Miss George's role was too minute evidently, for none of the critics even made mention of her presence. They did herald, however, a promising new player, Jessie Busley, who was active in the theatre until her death a bit over a year ago.

Limitations of space do not allow even a partial listing of the roles in which Grace George appeared during her early years in the theatre. Suffice it that with each new engagement her artistry and her reputation increased. By March 28, 1904, she had become important enough to play Louise in an all-star production of *The Two Orphans*. The cast of the famous d'Ennery and Cormon tragedy on this occasion included

Kyrle Bellew, James O'Neill, Clara Morris, Margaret Illington, Annie Irish, Frank Roberts and Elita Proctor Otis. It was of this production that Gustav Kobbe wrote in the NEW YORK TELEGRAM of March 29, 1904: "Probably no better cast than last night's could have been gotten together for the revival. . . . It may be said at once from the attitude of last night's audience that the old play still holds the listener in its grip. . . . After each of the scenes in the third act Mr. Palmer (A. M. Palmer, the producer) was called before the curtain, and finally, after deprecating the custom of curtain speeches, made one."

On April 15, 1907, Miss George made another great success in *Divorcons*, and made her first London appearance in this play in June of that same year. *Divorcons* is a comedy from the pen of the master of the "well-made"



Photograph by Vandamm

Grace George as Mrs. Culver in *The Constant Wife*, a comedy by Somerset Maugham.

play, Victorien Sardou. First produced in New York in 1882, the play was a favorite of Mrs. Minnie Maddern Fiske and many other famous actresses of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was last seen locally in a professional production when Grace George staged a revival in 1913. Charles Darnton wrote of that production: "Happily, the reputation of *Divorcons* was made long ago, so it only remains to speak of the acting in last night's performance. . . . Miss George was at her best in the perverse moods of Cyprienne."

Miss George attained a new pinnacle in her career when in December, 1915, she produced George Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara*. Many of us know this play only through the excellent film in which Wendy Hiller appeared as Barbara Undershaft. In 1915 Shaw had not yet been completely accepted by the American theatre-goer. A decade later his

reputation was solidly established and this triumph was largely due to the pioneering work of Grace George and her cohorts. Three months later Miss George produced the Bard of Malvern's *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* and appeared as Lady Cicely, the role written by Shaw for Ellen Terry. This play was quite recently revived by the New York City Theatre Company with Edna Best in the glamorous role. Thus a new generation of theatre-goers was afforded the privilege of seeing the play.

By the 1920's Grace George was one of the most firmly established stars in our theatre. Little point would be made by citing a list of her roles. In December, 1929, however, she appeared in St. John Ervine's *The First Mrs. Fraser*, one of her very great successes. This appearance was made at the Playhouse, the theatre on West 48th Street, which was owned for so many years by her late husband, William A. Brady, the great theatre manager and producer.

My first sight of Grace George was in the early '30's when she appeared with her step-daughter, the late Alice Brady, in Jacques Deval's *Mademoiselle*. I was impressed, but I was captivated when I saw her Mary Herries in *Kind Lady*, the Chodov adaptation of a story by Hugh Walpole. This is the exciting tale of how a generous lady is imprisoned in her home by a man to whom she unselfishly administers. She turns over one after another of her personal affairs to him until she one day discovers that he controls her very existence. Years elapse before she is able to outwit him and to regain her liberty. It is a tremendously exciting play and Miss George was superb in the role. It is wonderful to have Miss George active again, and we trust that after she has tired of her role in *The Constant Wife*, she will not take too long a rest before appearing in another role—or in a revival of *Kind Lady*.

One of the greatest of the "grand gals" is Ethel Barrymore. She is at present the senior member of the clan often referred to as "The Royal Family of Broadway." She has been active in the theatre for almost six decades, having made her debut on January 25, 1894—in New York—at the Empire in Sheridan's *The Rivals*. Her uncle, John Drew, the famous comedian, was for many years at the very top of the American theatre. Her brothers, John and Lionel, were for many years among the most important actors of the Main Stem. John died several years ago and illness confines Lionel to appearances on the radio. Some of us recall the memorable film in which all three of these Barrymores appeared, *Rasputin and the Empress*.

It would be difficult to determine which of Miss Barrymore's roles is the greatest favorite. It was in a now almost forgotten play, *Sunday*, that she spoke

A Selected List of RECOMMENDED PLAYS FOR CHILDREN

MODERN PLAYS

Crazy Cricket Farm
The Ghost of Mr. Penny
Little Lee Bobo, Chinatown Detective
Mr. Popper's Penguins
Mystery at the Old Fort
The Panda and the Spy
Seven Little Rebels

FAIRY-TALE PLAYS

Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp
Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves
Cinderella
The Elves and the Shoemaker
Jack and the Beanstalk
King Midas and the Golden Touch
The Land of the Dragon
Little Red Riding Hood
Peter Peter, Pumpkin Eater
Prince Fairyfoot
Rumpelstiltskin
The Sleeping Beauty
The Three Bears
The Wonderful Tang

HISTORICAL PLAYS

Arthur and the Magic Sword
Daniel Boone
The Indian Captive
Marco Polo
Young Hickory

PLAYS OF POPULAR STORIES

Five Little Peppers
Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates
Hansel and Gretel
Heidi
Huckleberry Finn
Little Women
Oliver Twist
The Pied Piper of Hamelin
Rip Van Winkle
Robin Hood
Robinson Crusoe
Tom Sawyer
Treasure Island

The plays listed above will be found fully described and illustrated in our catalogue. Write us for a free copy.

THE CHILDREN'S THEATRE PRESS

CLOVERLOT
ANCHORAGE, KENTUCKY

the line, "That's all there is; there isn't any more." Two seasons ago, Ethel Barrymore appeared in the star-studded annual event, the *Anta Album*, and those in charge of the event asked her to play once again Kate in James M. Barrie's *The Twelve Pound Look*. Many glamorous personages of the entertainment world appeared on the stage of the Ziegfeld Theatre that evening, but no one created more ado than Ethel Barrymore.

Miss Barrymore has played a tremendous variety of important roles. Among these are the Mme. Trentini of *Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines*, Constance in the aforementioned *The Constant Wife*, the Matriarch in *White-oaks* (a dramatization of a section of the well beloved *Jalna* stories), Paula in Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. Ten years ago she created for American audiences Miss Moffett, the school-teacher, in Emlyn Williams' *The Corn Is Green*. I think I shall always remember her entrance in this eloquent expression of gratitude on the part of the dramatist toward the woman who had come into the hills of his native Wales to teach him the glories of the English language. It was a truly great play and Miss Barrymore's enactment of equal stature.

Miss Barrymore is currently visible in a film version of the *Kind Lady*, adapted from the play made famous by Grace

George. Her vis-a-vis in the film is Maurice Evans with whom we visited in the second of this series of articles. I hope that she will not listen to the siren voice of the Hollywood studios too long before she again appears in the theatre of which—to many—she remains the First Lady.



Phyllis Leonard and Jack Schwemm in *January Thaw*, directed by Richard C. Johnson, Sponsor of Thespian Troupe 771, Barrington, Ill.

I regret having to speed along and to seemingly gloss over these ladies, but space does not allow as detailed an account as each deserves. Lucille Watson is another of the illustrious graduates of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. She was born in Quebec in 1879 and her first appearance was made in Ottawa in 1900. Three years later she made her New York bow in a work entitled *Hearts Aflame*. I think I first saw her in Helen Jerome's dramatization of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, though I recall seeing the billboards for *No More Ladies* in which she played with Melvyn Douglas.

Two roles stand out most clearly in my recollections of Lucille Watson. The first of these is as the impassioned patriot in Lillian Hellman's *Watch on the Rhine*. The play was set in the placid Maryland home of a gentle, cultured woman. Her daughter, who had been living abroad, returns to her home with her European husband. Thence too comes an agent of the Nazi government intent on silencing the spokesman for democracy. Miss Watson's gradual awakening to the way in which the destiny of Europe affects even a secluded Maryland matron was most moving.

The second scene was in a film of *Waterloo Bridge*—the version made

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Three of the Gilbreth girls in *Belles on Their Toes* (adapted from the sequel to *Cheaper by the Dozen*) consider, among other things, a meal provided by the Commissary. (From left, Debra Paget, Barbara Bates, Jeanne Crain.) *Belles on Their Toes* is a forthcoming release in technicolor.

NICK JANIOS ushered us into his tiny office at the far corner of the studio's restaurant. The walls were covered with framed photographs. We had just completed with unconcealed enthusiasm a tasty and well balanced lunch while surrounded by a talkative and relaxed company of screen players and directors, clerks and stenographers, laborers and executives, craftsmen and artists. Now we were looking at dozens of pictures of studio personnel, past and present, all inscribed to "Nick" with tributes to this chief of commissary at 20th Century-Fox.

Nick Janios came to America when he was in his early teens. A companion had joined a wealthy uncle here and had urged Nick to come over for the rest of his schooling. Nick came, attended school for two days, then went to work. "I couldn't speak English," he told us, "so I had to take a lot of kidding. That was in Boston. So I went to New York and started to earn a living." He gravitated to the restaurant business where employment opportunities were best. Years later he was in Los Angeles, head chef of one of the world's most famous restaurants. When the old Fox Studio persuaded him to manage their commissary there, he brought to his new position a rich knowledge of foods and their preparation and an honest regard for creature tastes and creature comforts. The Cafe de Paris on the 20th lot—it was so christened because of its high standards of food and service—has since achieved a reputation unsurpassed by comparable institutions.

Several things struck us as pleasant contradictions of well worn notions about Hollywood and its prize industry. Most impressive was the fact that the single large restaurant is used by every-

one on the lot, regardless of his position. The only space set apart is a small dining room for conference luncheons and special guests, where conversation can be pursued without competition from the lively chatter of the other diners. There is no nonsense here about "class distinctions."

Equally impressive were the women who served the customers. These were no bevy of chorus-line beauties doing menial work in the fond hope of being "discovered" by sharp-eyed producers. They were mature and capable waitresses performing an honored work with grace and skill. The woman who served us had been with Nick Janios for twenty years: she helped to create a congenial atmosphere at our table that added delight to the meal.

Important to the purse was the price list. Food at the studio cafe is served at cost; the employee here pays less for his meals than does anyone elsewhere in the industry for comparable food and service. This practice stems back to an early desire on the part of management to keep people on the lot, and to keep them happy there. Equivalent menus cannot be found within five miles of the studio. 20th wants its personnel to feel that the company is not only the best place to work, but the best place to eat. And the idea has more than paid off in good will and loyalty.

Nick Janios and his staff of 97 perform many operations, among them the providing of food for scenes in productions. A sheaf of orders was on the office desk. One of them specified items for a meal in *What Price Glory*, a new Technicolor version of that American classic under John Ford's direction: four gallons of onion soup; six dozens of stuffed hard-boiled eggs; six dozens of boiled potatoes and a like number of

SCREEN

FEEDING the LOT

By H. KENN CARMICHAEL

sandwiches; a standing rib roast of beef; 24 chicken legs; green salad, pies, and parsley. The commissary calls on the Miniature Props department for "prop" foods, authentic looking pieces which, Nick Janios confesses, look as appetizing as the originals. The commissary personnel decorate and dress these unpalatable and untasted imitations, adroitly arranging them with the edibles. In order to meet the needs of repeated "takes" on a scene, and occasional re-takes, extra supplies are on hand. The commissary has large storage and freezing spaces whose stock anticipates most of the production requirements.

Studio personnel on location within a hundred-mile radius of the lot are fed



Nick Janios, Head of Commissary, serves Betty Grable in the Company's spacious restaurant.

by the commissary from rented trucks and equipment. Beyond that radius caterers are hired to take over. Countless meals have been served on the lot itself in the dressing rooms of players whose special make-up or costumes can't be exposed to unnecessary risks. When *Wilson* was in production, approximately 1000 persons were fed three times a day during the shooting of convention scenes at the Los Angeles Shrine Auditorium.

A minor but important commissary

(Continued on page 27)

DRAMATICS

DIALING AROUND



George Fenneman (left) is an able aid to cigar-smoking Groucho Marx in the NBC radio comedy-quiz *You Bet Your Life*.

IN CONSIDERING why anyone — from audience to sponsor — should care to have anything to do with a radio quiz show, there are several important questions and answers. First, you ask yourself if the program is supposed to help you intellectually. The answer here is a big, unqualified "NO!" No one is interested in whether or not you learn anything from the answers.

Then there is the question of the sponsor or performers being interested in the financial well-being of the contestants. The answer this time is a qualified "No." The interest is not in swelling your purse, but the sponsor's. By making the prize worthwhile, the sponsor increases the audience appeal and thus his product is brought before more potential buyers.

And the final question is: Is the program intended to stimulate listener entertainment? The answer here is an unqualified "Yes!" for very obvious reasons. The quiz program that best fills this entertainment requirement is *You Bet Your Life* with Groucho Marx.

Groucho Marx, star of NBC's award-winning radio and television series, *You Bet Your Life*, started out in show business, believe it or not, as a boy soprano. It was in 1906, when Groucho was only eleven years old, that he joined the Gus Edwards troupe, that famed organization which started so many of today's great stars on their way up.

Born Julius Marx, Groucho is one of five brothers — all of whom have made their mark in the entertainment field. (In 1916 during a poker game, a whimsical monologist gave the five Marx brothers the nicknames of Chico, Harpo, Groucho, Zeppo and Gummo.) In fact show business is inbred in the beetle-browed comedian whose quips are absolutely foolproof insofar as toppers are concerned. His maternal grandfather was a German magician. His mother Minna toured with her father's troupe as a harpist. And Groucho's uncle, Al

Shean, of the famed "Callagher and Shean" vaudeville team, needs no introduction to the entertainment scene.

Money was scarce in the Marx household, but Mrs. Marx managed to scrape up enough funds to give Chico, the eldest boy, piano lessons. (Harpo learned to play the harp by himself, incidentally.)

Groucho left the Edwards gang to tour the country with the Leroy trio, which impersonated girl singers. Groucho was lost to the trio forever one dark day in Denver. His voice had changed . . .

In 1910 Mrs. Marx reorganized a trio known as *The Three Nightingales* — Groucho, a tenor, and a girl. Harpo joined the group which then became known as the *Four Nightingales*. Mrs. Marx and an aunt became involved, and the act was known as *The Six Mascots!* Why they didn't keep on adding nightingales is one of show business' mysteries.

Eventually, however, Chico and Gummo teamed with Harpo and Groucho in 1916 to make the Four Marx Bros. synonyms for hilarity throughout the world. In 1922 the boys bought a musical which they revised and titled *I'll Say*

She Is! The show was a smash in New York and Chicago and the boys were on their way. Then followed the great Marx Bros. successes: *The Cocoanuts* and *Animal Crackers*, both made into hit films. Later from Hollywood came *Monkey Business*, *Horsefeathers*, *Duck Soup* and *A Night at the Opera*.

The brothers retired from the screen after *The Big Store* but returned in 1941 to make *A Night in Casablanca*. Meanwhile, Groucho had entered the field of letters, and had written many articles plus a book entitled *Many Happy Returns*.

Groucho is not a stranger to the air waves; he and Chico starred in their own network show in 1934. Since 1947 Groucho has made an entire nation laugh with his ad libs in *You Bet Your Life*. In 1948 he won the valued Peabody Award for his work on the show.

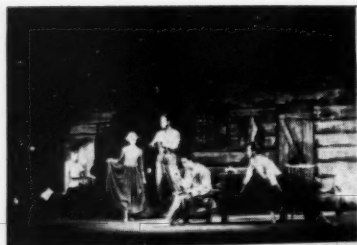
Groucho, now 56 years old, is five feet, eight inches tall, has brown eyes, black hair, and now boasts a bona fide moustache, which replaces the famed black dab of paint on his upper lip. He loves tennis, baseball, and naturally, practical jokes.

The program features three couples from the studio audience, each contestant being selected because of a radically different vocation. After being interviewed by the trigger-witted Groucho, each couple is started off on the quiz with a credit of \$20, of which they can bet any or all on the chance that between them, they will be able to answer the first question. When they miss, the amount of their bet is subtracted from the balance on hand. Each question pays even money, with a possible total of \$320. The couple finishing with the highest amount wins a chance at the grand prize of \$1,000, which is upped \$500 each week it remains unanswered. Each couple also has the

(Continued on page 26)



Thespian Troupe 1068, Maysville, Ky., sponsored Senior Class Play, *Here Comes Charlie*, Mrs. Arlie Wells, Sponsor.



Six scenes from *Cradle of Glory*, an unpublished play of Abe Lincoln in Indiana, by Helen McNett.

CRADLE OF GLORY, a drama in three acts by Marie McNett, the first play ever produced—and so far the only one—covering the very important early years of Lincoln's life in Indiana. 3 m.; 3 w.; 3 child. Royalty quoted upon application to the author.

Suitability

NOTHING in the script of *Cradle of Glory* needs to be discarded for special groups, although it is adaptable. At the Barnum Theatre, seating capacity 350, there were excellent facilities for a fine production—staff, capital, advertising, and the unlimited backing of a producer who believed the play deserved the best premiere possible. The cast was mostly students of the Chicago School of Expression and Dramatic Art, owned by Mr. Barnum. The theatre audience consisted mostly of year after year subscribers who expected and got good productions and Mr. Barnum told me their response to the play was most favorable and enthusiastic.

In contrast, the second production was the first play produced by the first drama class of the Detroit Evening Schools, so the director started from scratch—with no sets, staff, or capital and with players of little experience. The audience was composed of students, parents, friends and teachers. Mrs. Lillotte wrote me, "Your play leaves a lasting impression on those who see it. I've had a number of phone calls complimenting the play itself."

The Ricks College facilities lie somewhere between these two. Although without the facilities of a commercial theatre, they have a trained staff, with adequate facilities for production. Next July another type of group is producing *Cradle of Glory*—the teen-age Oak Lane Players of Wayne, Pennsylvania, whose Managing Producer, Mr. William Beason, III, is himself a teen-ager. It is also being seriously considered in Tennessee for arena style playing.

Plot

The story of the play is the struggle of Abraham Lincoln, who lived in In-

scrin curtain falling between him and the audience. A spotlight focuses on the profile and shoulders of the older, bearded Lincoln, wearing a high hat and shawl.

Both directors agree that Nancy must be slender and especially good in her part because of the death scene. Children in these productions were portrayed by children of patrons at Michiana Shores (John D. Johnston was played by a girl) and from the Detroit Conservatory of Music.

Directing

Mr. Barnum considers the fireside

PLAY OF THE MONTH
Edited by Eerl W. Blank

Staging

CRADLE of GLORY

By **MARIE McNETT**

diana during his formative years (age seven to twenty-one), for knowledge, freedom and direction. It covers the death of his mother Nancy; the influence of the stepmother, Sarah Bush Lincoln, in the home; the winning of his first law case; and his finding himself as an individual.

Casting

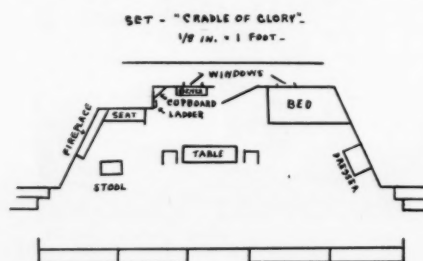
To the previous directors, the casting of a young Abe who could give the illusion of growing did not present a problem. They agreed that he must be tall and thin. The problem of Lincoln portrayed by one actor was solved as follows: In Act I Abe is barefoot, wears homespun, and is generally sitting on the floor or sitting down. Later he is never sitting on the floor. After he has won his first law case, we see him dressed in "store clothes." For the Epilogue, which shows Lincoln a man of fifty-two, the lights were dim with a

scene between Abe and his mother, also Abe's address upon returning home as strong features. Mrs. Ffrench considered the mood serious and sad, with the tempo changing when the children enter, suggesting gayety. She added lightness to the play by directing Dennis as a humorous, bouncy sort of fellow in contrast to Abe. To Mrs. Lillotte the mood of the play is one of serious, friendly existence. The tempo varies although seriousness of purpose dominates the scenes. The death scene slows the tempo but Sally Bush Lincoln pulls the tempo back into a brighter mood.

Rehearsals

Reading of lines several times before stage rehearsals during one week—every morning, afternoon and night for four days. Monday 1st Act; Tuesday 2nd Act; Wednesday 3rd Act; Thursday Dress Rehearsal. (Michiana Shores)

(Continued on page 24)



THE Broadway theatre goes into the second half of the 1951-52 season in rather dismal shape. Several of the current two dozen attractions will die ere another month has passed and, though some new attractions will fill the cavities, it does not denote a healthy state. A handful of attractions is playing to capacity business. The majority of these are musical shows—the still booming *South Pacific*; the newer Rodgers and Hammerstein product, *The King and I*; *Guys and Dolls*. In the non-musical category—the two character comedy, *The Fourposter*; the recent arrival, *Point of No Return*, adapted by Paul Osborn from the novel by John P. Marquand, and the First Drama Quartette's reading of *Don Juan in Hell*, the rarely heard section of George Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman*.

The success of the First Drama Quartette quite astounds me. I am not surprised that a team composed of Charles Boyer, Cedric Hardwicke, Charles Laughton and Agnes Moorehead (to recite them in alphabetical order) is a smash hit. All of these excellent players are known to a large audience through their film work. All have appeared in major Hollywood roles time and again. I am amazed that a great throng will turn out to hear them read Shaw. It has been a long time since a reading was done on such a scale in the Broadway sector and I believe that the current success will bring a return of this type of entertainment. Emlyn Williams has already announced that he will soon appear in New York in his program made up of readings from Charles Dickens.

Readings were at one time a much followed form of endeavor. Most of the great actors of the nineteenth century used to appear regularly as readers. I have always been amused by the entry in the diary of William Charles Macready for November 7, 1850, re a reading of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* for the students at Rugby: "The reading was to begin at half-past two, but it must have been within a quarter to three o'clock before I opened my book, and I was uneasy lest the daylight should fail me, as it began to obscure during the later scenes. I took much pains to keep up the excitement, and by the abbreviation I think I succeeded in keeping alive the interest of the audience. The boys, who knew I had obtained a half-holiday for them, applauded of course most lustily at the conclusion."

When Maurice Evans produced *Man and Superman* four seasons ago, special matinees of the *Don Juan in Hell* were announced. Such performances, however, never took place—to the disappointment of many. The reading by the First Drama Quartette completes the excellent production of Evans and his associates. Archibald Henderson, the

THEATRE on BROADWAY

By PAUL MYERS

biographer of Shaw, has written in his study of the Sage of Malvern: "The *Dream in Hell* was largely ignored by the general public because it was almost always omitted in the stage production. The impact of Shaw's philosophy on the public was so slight as to be negligible; and there was no general understanding of his religion, which is briefly but clearly sketched in the *Dream in Hell*, until the appearance of *Back to Methuselah* eighteen years later."

Another old play has returned in a very handsome revival. W. Somerset Maugham's *The Constant Wife* is a play associated by many with Ethel Barrymore. For many years Constance Middleton was one of her favorite and most often played roles. Last summer Katharine Cornell appeared in the part at the Festival held each year in Central City, Colorado. Its success was so overwhelming that she decided to do the production in New York. Mr. Maugham's polished wit and urbanity come as a very welcome note in a season so fraught with poor imitations of these qualities.

More than a decade ago a brilliant revival of Maugham's *The Circle* took place locally. It was most successful and at that time I couldn't stop wondering why this author had deserted the theatre as completely as he did. Since then, two excellent films have brought him back into the ken of the theatregoer. His *Trio* and *Quartet* are still being shown to entranced audiences. Perhaps Willie Maugham will turn to the creation of a new theatre piece before too long. Certainly the popularity of Miss Cornell's revival would indicate that the theatre is attuned to his dicta.

The aforementioned revival of *The Circle* had a remarkable cast headed by Grace George, Tallulah Bankhead and John Emery. Oddly enough Miss George (for fuller information see the article on *The Grand Gals* in this issue) and Mr. Emery both figure prominently in the current revival of *The Constant Wife*. Mr. Emery is always a most reliable player, but it is a particular pleasure to be able to see Miss George again. She has been absent too long from the Broadway boards. Two seasons is too long to spare so great an actress from making an appearance.

One can always count upon Miss Cornell to surround herself with a sterling cast. At one time it was the custom

of leading ladies to cast mediocre actors in their support as an attempt to enhance their own artistry. No one could ever charge Katharine Cornell with resorting to this device. Her record in fact is enviable. Brian Aherne was brought to the American theatre to play Robert Browning in Miss Cornell's first production of *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*. Maurice Evans came hither to play Romeo with Miss Cornell when she revived *Romeo and Juliet* in 1935. Mr. Aherne is now playing Constance's philandering husband—the object of the lady's constancy. Still another member of the cast is a Cornell importation. Gertrude Musgrove was last seen in New York as Miss Cornell's younger sister in the memorable production of Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*. Miss Musgrove is again the younger sister in *The Constant Wife*.

The plot, very briefly, relates the manner in which Constance Middleton copes with her husband's infidelity. Her mother, sister, confidante, business associate, even the object of her husband's



Photo by Vandamm

Katharine Cornell, Grace George and Brian Aherne in the New York production of Maugham's *The Constant Wife*.

wandering affections offer counsel. Constance, however, has an excellent plan and follows it through. Mr. Maugham does not pretend that he has written a social document. He does not attempt to prescribe a method of treating marital discord. He has set out to write a comedy of manners and he has done just that—brilliantly.

A word must be said for the setting and the costumes of this production. It has been a long time since so handsome a visual effect has been accomplished hereabouts. Donald Oenslager's Harley Street drawing-room does much to enhance the beautiful acting which takes place within. I was particularly struck with the Chinoiserie wall-paper—it was sumptuous without detracting from the individuals of the play. Valentina and Bergdorf Goodman take credit for the ladies' clothes. The production was di-

(Continued on page 25)

THESPIAN

CHATTER

By Our
Student
Thespians

Dunbar, West Virginia (Thespians Troupe 252)

Thespians Troupe 252 opened the 1950-51 year by presenting *The Sixth Key*, a mystery-comedy in three acts with a cast of 8 girls and 6 boys. The annual one-act play entitled *The Case of the Weird Sisters* was given March 29. New members were inducted at a formal initiation given May 11 and 14. Several of the graduated members participated in the exercises. Immediately following the initiation, a banquet was held in honor of the one-act play casts of the Junior Dramatic, Dionysian and Thespian clubs.—*June Fannin, Publicity Manager*

Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin (Thespians Troupe 525)

The first production of the Lincoln High School Dramatic Club and of Troupe 525 in the fall of 1950 was *Life with Father*. In the spring the Thespians directed a group of four one-act plays which were *Two Crooks and a Lady*, *The No 'Count Boy*, *The Ugly Duckling*, and *Sparkin'*. In May the graduating Thespians helped in presenting *Moliere's Imaginary Invalid*. Throughout the year in Dramatic Club meetings, prospective Thespians directed and produced eight workshop plays to gain experience through a small audience. In May, 22 Thespians were initiated into the troupe. — *Betsy Dickerman, Reporter*



A scene from *Romeo and Juliet*, a production of the Amarillo, Texas, Sr. High School (Thespians Troupe 335), Mrs. N. W. Whitworth, Director.



Scene from *Belleville, Kan.*, High School Senior Class Play, *No Place to Park*. Mrs. E. C. Houdek is Sponsor of Troupe 933.

Victorville, California (Thespians Troupe 1092)

Beginning the year right with an impressive candlelight installation ceremony, Thespians of the National Thespian Society's Troupe 1092 of Victor Valley High School, Victorville, California, immediately followed through with their effective characterization of the background scenes from *The Nativity* for the school's annual musical Christmas program. The first play in the history of the school not to be sponsored by a class was the "first" set by this troupe when it presented its three-act play, *Our Miss Brooks*. As a final treat, thirty-five Thespians viewed Ray Bolger in his hit comedy *Where's Charley?* at the Philharmonic Auditorium in Los Angeles.—*Carolyn Stirsmar, Vice-President*

Normal, Illinois (Thespians Troupe 1156)

University High School installed a troupe of National Thespians at a public ceremony in the school library. The group's charter was received at the ceremony. The new officers are: Gilbert Barner, president; Evelyn Schnebly,

vice president; Marilyn McVicar, secretary; and James Howard, treasurer. G. Bradford Barber and W. Harlan Shaw, assistant professors of speech at Illinois State Normal University, are co-sponsors. There are 12 charter members. Installing officers were members of the National Thespians at Normal Community High School. Miss Colene Hoose is NCHS sponsor.—*Joan Sears, Scribe*

Brazil, Indiana (Thespians Troupe 872)

The newly organized Thespian troupe of Greencastle High School extended the hand of friendship to the well-established Thespian Troupe of Brazil High School when they invited them over for a big "do" last May. About forty active members from Brazil went and, from all reports, really enjoyed themselves. Greencastle had a dance band, had a play and program ready to present, and had lots of food. Their old gym was glowing with decorations. The whole party was a grand success! — *Sharon Mayfield, Reporter*

Clayton, Missouri (Thespians Troupe 322)

The activities of our Thespians are many and varied. Diane Diener, last year, gave an outstanding performance in *Joan of Lorraine*, and this summer worked in summer stock. Two original one-acts were directed last year, *The Rules of the Game* by Bob Crawford and *Keep Your Spirits High* by Joe Brockett. Last year's talent show, *Satan's Waitin'*, one of the best ever given here, was directed by Joyce Benson and I. W. Klein, her assistant, who will direct this year's show. With *Cheaper by the Dozen* planned for the major production, and 18 Thespians in the troupe, this year promises to be even better than last, and that's good!—*Joe Brockett, Reporter*

Ysleta, Texas (Thespians Troupe 799)

Recreating in their own style plays that were made famous through movies and books was part of the job done by the speech department of Ysleta High



The cast of **One Foot in Heaven**, Olathe, Colo., High School (Thespian Troupe 671), Adda Powers, Director.

School this past year. *Meet Me in St. Louis* was presented by the Sock and Buskin Club in November. The Senior Class gave *Little Women* on March 29, 30. Also on the agenda was the Sock and Buskin Club's presentation of *A Night of One-Act Plays* in the spring. *Special Guest*, *Fog on the Valley*, and *Bishop's Candlesticks* comprised the program. *Balcony Scene* was presented as the Interscholastic League contest play.—**Thespian Troupe President**

Upper Darby, Pennsylvania
(Thespian Troupe 1000)

Thespian Troupers 1000 were busy last year. They started with an experiment in which student directors and actors tried the script-in-hand method with cuts from *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Silver Cord*, and *Saturday's Children*. Then the seniors held court for Shaw's "Eliza," her professor "Higgins," his pal "Pickering," and the others of *Pygmalion*. . . . At Christmas, the beautiful radio play, *A Child Is Born*, was adapted for stage. . . . Probably the busiest fun came in February in bringing *The Three Bears* to the children. In March, the 1000-ers peeked into their neighbors' backyard in *Antigone*, *Madwoman of Chaillet*, *Emperor Jones* (ITM). Then the juniors went Pennsylvania Dutch with their "yet stills" and "Ford cars" in *Papa Is All*. On May 16, *Thespian Album 1950-51* closed an exciting year.—**Jean DeVries, Treasurer**

Celina, Ohio

(Thespian Troupe 473)

Ninety-five Lil' Abners, Daisy Maes, Schmoos, and assorted Dogpatch characters were feudin' at the annual Sadie Hawkins event sponsored by the Celina Thespian Troupe. Imagination and originality on the part of the Thespian members paid big dividends of po'k chops as the Lil Abner and Daisy Mae of the evening were chosen on the basis of the best costumes to reign over the assembled Dogpatchers. Entertainment for the evening included folk and square dancing in addition to round dancing. Eats for the affair consisted of sloppy schmoo-burgers, ice cream, potato

chips and carbonated corn squeezerings. The Dogpatch citizens, who had shed their shyness as well as their store-bought settlement clothes had a whoppin' good time.—**Reporter**

Shawnee, Oklahoma
(Thespian Troupe 948)

Our school presented four plays this year. They are as follows: Student Council, junior, senior, and one sponsored by the Thespians. The senior play this year was *Heaven Can Wait*. During the intermission the Thespian Club served free coffee and then took donations to help pay membership fees. Our Thespian program this year consists of an evening of one-act plays and readings preceded by our Thespian initiation ceremony. — **Jo Ann Polk, Reporter**

Newark, Delaware
(Thespian Troupe 931)

Troupe 931 secured and redecored one of the small rooms in their building for a dramatics library and workshop. A three-speed phonograph was purchased from the proceeds of a film, *Pygmalion*. In dramatic presentations the troupe participated in assemblies, took leading roles in *Seven Sisters*, and presented *Where the Cross Is Made* in the ninth Annual State Play Festival. Twelve new Thespians were informally initiated prior to a picnic held by the

troupe.—**Kay Knighton, Reporter**

Harlan, Iowa

(Thespian Troupe 159)

One-act plays: *Pink and Patches*, *The Romancers*, and *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals*. The last was presented at S.U.I. for participation in the Speech Festival. Miss Myrna Brechbiel, the instructor of speech and dramatic work, selected the plays so that every member of the Thespians had participation in the plays. Sets were made and the speech class boys put up and took down sets between the plays. We initiated new members and planned how to get more people interested in speech and dramatic work.—**Carolyn Carl, Reporter**

Follansbee, West Virginia

(Thespian Troupe 577)

Our troupe got off to a good start in October by electing the following officers: president, Angela Weeda; vice-president, Doris Heaton; and secretary-treasurer, Joan McIntosh. During football season, *Saints and Football Diet* were among the one-act plays presented in assembly. In January, the senior class play, *Seventeenth Summer*, was presented. Members also participated in an Easter pageant, *The Questioner*. *Men Are Like Streetcars*, the junior class play, was given in April. A broadcast over a local radio station and participation in the *Blossomtime Minstrel* were also included in the year's activities. Membership was granted to fourteen students early in May. Plans were made for next year with Shirley G. Johnson troupe sponsor.—**Joan McIntosh, Secretary**

Sallisaw, Oklahoma
(Thespian Troupe 1050)

Our Thespian Troupe 1050 was organized last year, so we are proud of the fact that our troupe is one of the most popular activities in our school. We initiated eleven new members in a formal ceremony on January 18, 1951. The ceremony was very beautiful and impressive. A Stephen Foster program was prepared for the North Central Association Committee when they were evaluating our school. We have taken part

(Continued on page 22)



Thespian Troupe 562, Valley Union High School, Coachella, Calif., Elaine Buttrud, Sponsor.

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CHATTER

(Continued from page 21)

on panel discussions for civic groups and have made a thorough study of the United Nations Organization. Our motto is *A Speech Student Is Informed*.—Doris Stewart, Secretary

Alton, Illinois

(Thespian Troupe 126)

Professional acting behind the scenes was observed this year by four Alton High Thespians who assisted the Claire Tree Major Troupe from New York; while the other members of Troupe No. 126 enjoyed, with the audience, the series of four performances. Each semester a one-act play, directed by two graduating members, was presented before the student body in assembly. One of the plays was an original melodrama. To replenish the treasury the members devoted one day to making and selling candy to the faculty. Each semester's activities ended with a banquet, Best Thespian Award, and induction of new members.—Jamie Sherwood, Best Thespian

Kenova, West Virginia

(Thespian Troupe 115)

Our school presented the following during last year: three-act plays: *Cash and Carrie*, *Tiger House*, and *Seventeenth Summer*; one-act plays: *Peace on Earth* and *Georgie Porgie* given for money for stage equipment; revues: *Follies of '50*, *Talent Show* and *Musical Revue*. *Town Meeting of the Air* was given over WSAZ, Huntington, W. Va. Special programs presented to Woman's Club, Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, and Veteran's Hospital. Ex-



Peter Wojciechowski, Harland Hovind and Sherry Adams in a scene from *The Emperor's New Clothes*, presented by the Anoka, Minn., High School, Thespian Troupe 596, M. Hوجلund, Sponsor.

changed programs with Buffalo H. S. Annual Thespian dinner-dance was held in February with 136 alumni and active members attending and we installed 34 new members.—Lois Williams, Secretary

Spokane, Washington

(Thespian Troupe 1064)

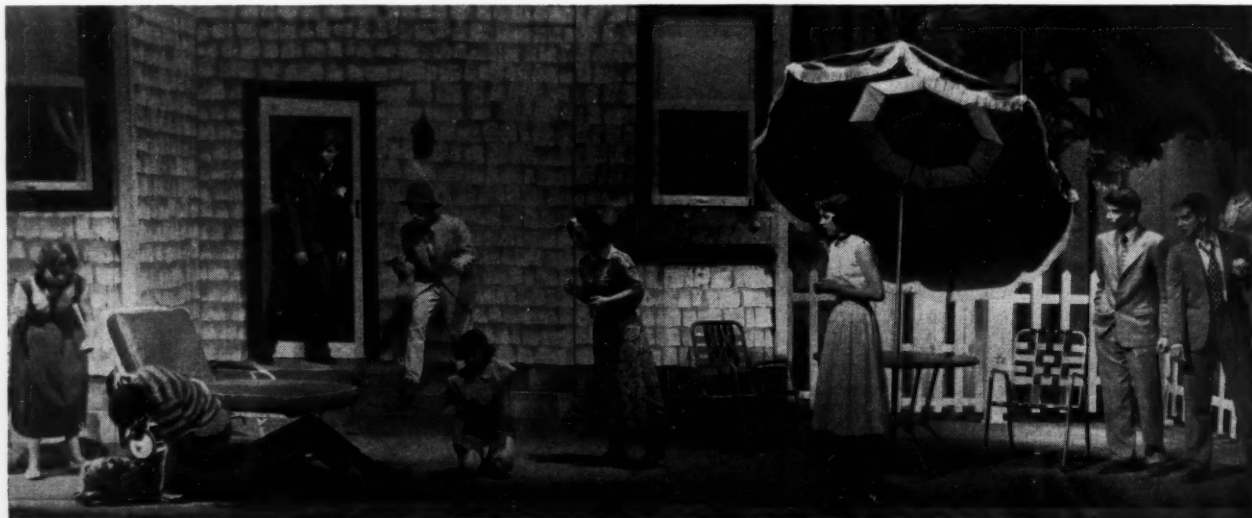
Thespian Troupe 1064 sponsors two workshops of student-directed one-act plays each semester for dramatics students. These plays are presented in groups to an invited audience. Another Thespian activity is an entertainment convocation given for the students at Rogers to raise money for the student body fund. These programs are written, directed, and acted in by members of the Thespian troupe. The date is usually set so that this same program may be given at the formal initiation of the new members. Members of the Thespian troupe are very active in dramatics at Rogers. In the spring all-school play, *Belvedere*, the members of the cast,

with the exception of two freshmen boys, are members of the troupe. — Donna McAvoy, Vice President

Mineral, Virginia

(Thespian Troupe 224)

Our Drama Class, consisting of ten girls only, this year has accomplished much and is now working on our Senior Class Night Program. Among our year's productions were: an operetta, *The Gilbert and Sullivan Revue*; the senior play, *The Showboat Minstrels*. We assisted the faculty in their annual play by publicizing, ushering and applying make-up. We have built flats, made costumes, advertised and ushered for practically every play given in our auditorium. In September we bought a Reelex Tape Recorder. We've recorded speeches, worked with radio, and several girls who participated in the state literary contest rated highly. — Rachel Duncan, Reporter



A scene from *Home Sweet Homicide*, a production of the Greenwich, Conn., High School (Thespian Troupe 243), Ruth Morgan, Director.



Martha Linn, Dora Wurster and Marceita Edniston in *The Spotlighters*, a production of Celina, Ohio, High School (Thespian Troupe 473), M. Putman, Director.

Henryetta, Oklahoma (Thespian Troupe 44)

This season we produced three full length plays: *Mother Is a Freshman*, *Clementine*, *Don't Keep Him Waiting*, and a one-act play, *Confessional*. A repeat performance of the musical *Daniel Boone* was made. Eleven students have earned Thespian membership. Derwood Clay is troupe sponsor.—Peggy Nicholson, Secretary

Cleveland, Ohio (Thespian Troupe 699)

The bi-weekly club meeting of Troupe 699 of Brooklyn High School was devoted to planning troupe activities and the selection of plays and committees. *Ramshackle Inn* was given in November, three one-act plays in March, (*Crippled Heart*, *Long Christmas Dinner*, and *High Window*, the last being the winner of a trophy). Members helped the Men's Booster Club in a variety show in April. Seven members attended the Kent State University Drama

Clinic in January. — Gerry Deas, Reporter

Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin (Thespian Troupe 144)

A highlight of our dramatic season is always the Thespian Open House held this year in March. This is the time when parents are invited to the school to observe some Thespian activities. The formal initiation ceremony is always first. Fourteen students had completed the requirements and were initiated at that time. A one-act comedy, *Miss Sydney Carton*, was presented after which all (83 parents plus two grandparents) were invited to the dining room for refreshments.

Each fall our troupe sponsors a children's play. *Mr. Dooley Junior* was given this year and much enjoyed by elementary and junior high students. The fall of 1949 we did *Cinderella in Loreland*, and the year before *Once in a Palace*. We produced an original melodrama later in the fall as the greater part of a variety show given to

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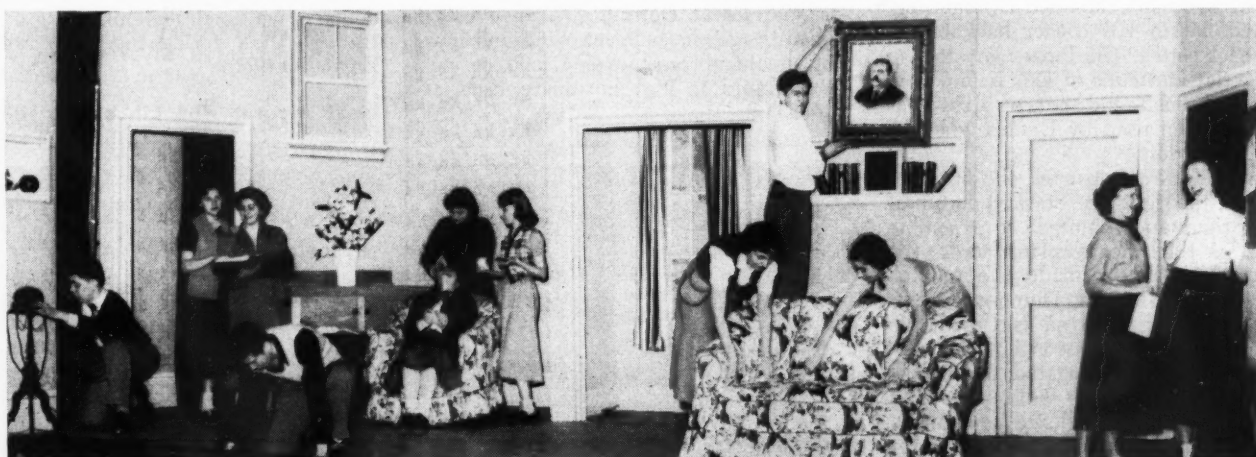
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raise money for the school annual. Other one-acts have been given at club meetings.—Judith Nicholson, Secretary

Cumberland, Maryland (Thespian Troupe 230)

Briefly, our story for 1950-51 is this. *Hansel and Gretel* featured our Halloween float in October; Clarence Day's *Life with Mother* in December; *H.M.S. Pinafore*, February; inter-class play tournament, April; May Day pageant, May; Verse Speaking Choir recitals, November and April. We sponsored two initiations and three social affairs. Among these was the May Dance honoring the May Court and pageant cast. In the play tournament the seniors presented *The Finger of God*; juniors, *The Monkey's Paw*; sophomores, *Elmer*. Honors went to the senior play, with a senior girl and sophomore boy capturing acting awards.—Christina Windish, Reporter



Crew setting up for *The Professor's Circus*, Troupe 156, Revere, Mass., High School, Emily Mitchell, Sponsor.

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STAGING

(Continued from page 18)

Mrs. Lillotte rehearsed Monday and Wednesday evenings, usually from 7 to 9 o'clock. Rehearsals began January 2 for February 10 production.

Stage Problems

Both Mr. Barnum and Mrs. Lillotte said the one set required for *Cradle of Glory* offered no outstanding stage problems. Mrs. Lillotte planned her set for a high school auditorium stage seldom used for that purpose and designed the set so it could be repainted for other plays.

She made flats of 4 x 1 furring strips and 40 inch unbleached heavy muslin painted with dark brown logs, touched up with black and with yellow-gray for chinking. Kemtone was used because the flats were unsized. A piece of muslin with logs painted on to match the wall was tacked over the windows which must first appear in Act II, Scene 2. At Michiana Shores the windows were blocked out by a skin and articles of clothing. Because of stage limitations, the ladder could not show on Mrs. Lillotte's set, so she extended a single log-painted flat in UR corner back of the high back settee. Cardboard was tacked on the flat and ends of logs painted on. Behind the flat and out of sight was the stepladder used by Dennis when he went to the loft.

Mrs. Lillotte constructed the fireplace of boxes, the right size, stacked on top of each other and painted to resemble stones. A thick heavy plank across the top of these boxes made the mantelpiece. A good-looking Dutch oven was made of a box stood on end with the lid on, with a shelf put in it. The cupboard, made of corrugated cardboard, was strong enough to hold pans and dishes. She made large size pans and a pot out of newspapers, flour and water and painted them black. Lincoln's top

PRODUCTIONS OF "CRADLE OF GLORY"

Barnum Summer Theatre at Michiana Shores, Indiana. Norman N. Barnum, producer; Louise Ffrench, director. August 6, 7, 8, 1948.

Evening High School, Adult Education Department, Detroit, Michigan. Mayme English Lillotte, director. February 10, March 1, 1950; February 12, 1951.

Ricks College Players, Rexburg, Idaho. William Clayton Kauffman, director. International Theatre Month Play, March, 1951.

hat was made the same way. The turtle was made of a rock and cloth.

Lighting

In the Barnum production modern stage spotlights were used and well controlled on the switchboard. Light from the fireplace lighted the bed during the death scene. The technician used floods, but to the audience, as death approached, the fire light died.

Mrs. Lillotte used considerable red and yellow as she wanted a warm soft light in the cabin. A small floodlight with red was used with foots of red and blue with only a few whites to give the right shade. Not having a scrim curtain for the Epilogue, Mrs. Lillotte opened the curtains to show Lincoln standing back of a table—with a flood light centered on his profile. All should be blacked out except Lincoln's face and shoulders.

Costuming

Mrs. Ffrench used a library book showing fashions of the period. She used light blue, tans, red and white to brighten up the entrance of the children. In the Epilogue Lincoln, in profile, wore a top hat, shawl and beard.

Make-up

Mrs. Lillotte found no special make-up problems. She used sun tan, rouge, eye shadow and different shades of powder as per character. However, Mrs. Ffrench considered make-up must be carefully chosen for the ill and dying Nancy and with the ageing of Abe for the man of 52.

Budget

Mr. Barnum told me no budget was set for the premiere of *Cradle of Glory*. No expense was spared in giving the play all possible atmosphere. Mrs. Lillotte does not remember the cost of the original set at Detroit. On an average school stage she believes the brand new set should not cost over \$50.00, if students build it, and boxes are used as described.

Publicity

Michiana Shores production—notice appeared in Indianapolis, South Bend, Chicago and Michigan City papers, on the Chamber of Commerce Bulletin Board and play programs. Cards were sent to subscribers, and others. As a result, it played to capacity the first night and attendance on other nights compared favorably with other productions, despite unusual competition from a police show and outdoor opera.

Detroit production—a successful educational presentation—not to make money but to make expenses. It was advertised only in a school and neighborhood paper, as the city papers do not advertise amateur productions. After the first production a mimeographed school bulletin was sent out announcing the March production. With this little advertising the second audience was twice as large.

Results

"The educational values are high. Performers enjoyed working on *Cradle of Glory*. The Play plays itself."—Louise Ffrench.

"A better understanding of Abraham Lincoln—his obstacles in life—and how he overcame them with the desire to learn. Highly entertaining, and the audience sat quietly through the tense scenes and was very sympathetic, especially through the death scene. There was a deep feeling, I'm sure, of patriotism experienced by the audience during the Epilogue. The cast felt that they had really done a patriotic service and have asked to repeat the play for another group. The cast loves the play. Personally, I think each school and college should present this play for their students—we need such plays right now through these trying times."—Mayme English Lillotte.

Next Month: Abe Lincoln in Illinois.



Thespian Troupe 1050, Sallisaw, Okla., High School, Mrs. T. L. Ward, Sponsor.



The family council in **Cheaper by the Dozen** as presented by the Noblesville, Ind., High School Troupe 24, Elna G. Hunter, Sponsor.

THEATRE

(Continued from page 19)

rected by Miss Cornell's husband, Guthrie McClintic.

Mr. McClintic is involved too with the sterling season announced by the New York City Theatre Company at the municipally operated City Center of Music and Drama. Most of the activities at this playhouse are either opera or ballet events, but the New York City Theatre Company takes over twice each season—during the Christmas season and the month or so thereafter and late in the spring—just before the theatre takes off for the barns and the outdoor amphitheatres.

This year the season will be inaugurated with a revival of Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* in the Max Faber adaptation. Maurice Evans, Mildred Dunnock, Kent Smith and Diana Lynn are heading the cast which is under the direction of Morton Da Costa. The second production will be Eugene O'Neill's *Anna Christie* with Celeste Holm in the title role. The final offering will be the aforementioned Mr. McClintic's production of Clemence Dane's play about the poet, Thomas Chatterton. Judith Anderson will once again be seen in a role she made famous when the play was done here in 1934.

The new plays have been relatively scant and have not fared so well as the revivals. John Van Druten, a most accomplished play-maker, is responsible for the dramatization of Christopher Isherwood's *Berlin Stories*, which is showing under the title, *I Am a Camera*. He has used the same device formerly employed in his dramatization of Kathryn Forbes' *Mama's Bank Account*—the oft-played, *I Remember Mama*. He has introduced the author as one of the characters in the play and allowed him to tell his story.

Julie Harris, who scored so signal a triumph at the Empire in *Member of the Wedding*, is back at the same old stand in *I Am a Camera*. Her woman of the

streets is a vastly different person from the adolescent Frankie and Miss Harris enacts the role with equal brilliance. William Prince plays Christopher Isherwood.

John Patrick, who enjoyed great success with *The Hasty Heart* and hasn't hit it quite right since, is trying again with *Lo and Behold!* The cast, under the direction of Burgess Meredith, is of inestimable help. It includes Leo G. Carroll, Jeffrey Lynn, Lee Grant (the memorable shop-lifter of *Detective Story* in both stage and screen versions) and Doro Merande. The general critical reaction would indicate that it is going to be a tough pull toward success for this entry.

Few attractions have survived so strenuous a pre-Broadway ordeal as *Nina*, which came into the Royale last week. Samuel Taylor, the adapter of *The Happy Time*, adapted this farce from the French of Andre Roussin. In addition to the usual script problems, this production had a very stormy time with a leading player—Gloria Swanson. Up to a few days before its local bow, it was not certain whether Miss Swanson would appear or not. It was reported that she was dissatisfied with her role, that the contractual arrangements did not suit her and various other causes were advanced—most of them of a very slanderous nature. At length, however, the show went on with Miss Swanson as the only distaff member of a four character cast. David Niven, Alan Webb and William Lemassena complete the roster.

Another importation from the French

is *Gigi*. Plays with ladies' names as titles seem to abound this season. There are three on Broadway at the present time and four more have been scheduled for the early part of the year. Anita Loos, the author of the celebrated *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, has adapted this work from a novel by Colette. Audrey Hepburn was imported to play the title role and has become our theatre's newest star because of her sterling job. Cathleen Nesbitt is seen as the lady who endeavors to acquaint Gigi with the ways of Paris and Parisians.

I saw a very interesting off-Broadway production of Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* done by the Columbia Theatre Associates at the University of that name on Morningside Heights. In my days as an actor I had played assorted minor roles in this play but had seen it produced only in the Rodgers and Hart version, *The Boys from Syracuse*. The play is not one of my favorites of the Bard's works—the comedy being a bit forced for contemporary tastes—but I was glad to be able to see the thing done. Under the direction of Prof. Milton Smith the cast did acceptably well. The setting was magnificent. Victor Edmond Jacoby, an instructor in the theatre department at Adelphi College, had designed a production for the Columbia University group fifteen years ago. This was an enlargement of the earlier setting, which had been designed for a stage smaller than the one now available in the Brander Matthews Theatre. It was really superb.

This week one of the top events of the season will open at the Ziegfeld Theatre! Laurance Olivier and Vivien Leigh in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*. The success of this venture is assured since it has rolled up an enormous advance sale. I hope that I will be able to tell about at least one of the items when next we meet in the pages of DRAMATICS.

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DIALING

(Continued from page 17)

chance to mention "the secret word" that allows them to split \$100.

Groucho's right hand man throughout the programs is announcer George Fenneman. Musical portions of the programs are provided by the orchestra under the direction of Jerry Fielding. John Guedel, originator of *You Bet Your Life*, produces the series, which is co-directed by Bob Dwan and Bernie Smith from Hollywood.

George Fenneman, announcer of the show, is as neat as the proverbial pin and a perfectionist in the proper usage of the English language. His mike manner is that of a highly dignified college professor—and this is the very reason for the hysterics on the part of the audiences when Groucho starts him laughing.

Well-known in radio as an easy mark for a tease, Fenneman is often completely convulsed by the Marx-ian wit. Groucho knows this, and it is to his everlasting delight that he heckles, interrupts, and generally good-naturedly bedevils Fenneman until the poor announcer is so broken up that he has to gasp for breath.

It is Fenneman's chore to total the running score of each pair of contestants as they either successfully or unsuccessfully answer Groucho's questions. George, under the stress of the moment, has sometimes been known to make an error in the addition or subtraction of the people's winnings. Always sharp-eared studio audience members shout out the correct amount and then George's life for the remainder of the program is hardly bearable, but it's all in fun, and Groucho never carries the jibes too far.

At the same time Marx often takes the opportunity to develop and ferment a harmless conflict between some couple facing him over the microphones and television cameras. When he's successful at such an endeavor, the comic delights in dropping into the role of beneficent mediator, never failing to leave the twosome in a state of cheerful confusion by the rapid turn of events.

The *You Bet Your Life* show has won more than a dozen awards, including the coveted "Emmy" of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, but the one that makes Groucho proudest is the recent almost unanimous choice by the inmates of San Quentin Prison. Certainly that is a unique distinction, but anyone's choice of the program is understandable.

All quiz shows can boast of a certain amount of listener appeal, but few can talk about the master of ceremonies as having the spontaneity of a Groucho Marx. This is not a one-man show, but one makes it as attractive as it is.

Random Observations

At a time when there is talk—valid talk—about the failure of the television camera directors to keep their lenses focused for more than their calculated fifteen seconds on any subject for fear of boring the viewer, it is interesting to take note of one of the latter-day techniques in video. Instead of cramming the scene with all sorts of attention attractors, for an entire scene—and sometimes more than that—the camera concentrates on all of the characters who are shown close up and in a tightly-knit group. The backdrop is pure darkness. The result of this method is that the viewer pays a good deal of attention to what is going on. There are no detractors such as ornate sets and varying lighting effects. The audience must perforce study the faces and clothing of the actors. They must listen to the script the author wrote. They must study the characters. Their concentration on the action is not interrupted by a scenic director who beclouds the spoken lines by making a production number of each scene, or by a costume designer who turns the show into a costume piece, or a cameraman who suffers with a slow-motion St. Vitus dance.

More about Commercials

In connection with last month's notes in this column concerning commercials, it should be said that there are different approaches used by different advertisers. There are the myriad ways of shouting at or to the prospective customer. Their techniques range from the whispered "breath-taking flavor" ads of Dentyne Chewing Gum to the Lifebuoy Soap caution that you can be clean on all thirteen body points.

There is the approach used by the American Railroads on the *Railroad Hour* that amounts to little more than a wailing appeal. It all adds up to one of the country's biggest, most powerful aggregations banding together to make a lament. The result is that by the time the announcer is finished with his commercial, the audience is not only in tears, but is ready to dig into its collective pocket to make a handout. At least, it's almost ready.

A diametrically opposite approach is the one used by the DuPont Company on its *Cavalcade of America* series. Here a more positive approach is used. The claim is for "better living through chemistry." The announcer reaches for your plaudits rather than for your sympathy by telling you how his sponsor is doing useful things to aid other producers around the country, as well as aiding the consumer.

All advertising is a way of reaching the consumer's pocketbook. It's just that some advertisers are more subtle and less distasteful than others.

DRAMATICS

FEEDING

(Continued from page 16)

service is the providing of coffee on the sound stages wherever a picture is in production. This is an expense charged to the production itself. Occasionally a need arises that calls for special action. Nick Janios took from his desk a charge slip for ten gallons of hot chocolate, ordered the night before by a unit production manager. A critical sound recording session had been in progress — it carried on through most of the night — and the commissary was closed. The unit man promptly had the chocolate delivered to the studio by one of Hollywood's popular restaurants. Nick Janios understands these emergencies, for he has a great respect for hunger, and a proper mistrust of taut nerves and weary bodies.

The people at 20th feel that the studio restaurant is their restaurant. When a birthday needs celebrating, someone orders a cake and one of the pastry cooks stays over to make it. When a worker goes on a diet, he gets special attention at no increase in cost. If an employee requests a special recipe that merits space on the printed menu, his name identifies the dish, thus the Henry King cocktail (clam and tomato juice) and the Anne Baxter salad (cole slaw with minced chicken, tongue, and ham).

In addition to operating the Cafe de Paris, Nick Janios supervises the Coffee Shop where light lunches are served and where coffee is available most of the day. A small cafeteria on the opposite side of the extensive lot still sees service in the frequent dinner meetings of Studio Club personnel, who have their own informal "chapters" of veterans and fraternal organizations. At one time the cafeteria served lunches to large numbers of employees who were inconveniently distant from the studio restaurant, but two factors brought about the limiting of service to the Coffee Shop and the Cafe. Bus service was established to carry workers to the central eating spot and, at about the same time, the unions and management agreed on a work schedule that permits workers on the two shifts to eat lunch in their homes. While many of the studio personnel enjoy this last change, others still favor the restaurant, and the commissary still serves daily a total of from 1800 to 2000 persons.

Nick Janios was glad to talk about employer-employee history at his studio. He reflects that during his nearly 20 years at 20th, only three people have been dismissed from the commissary staff, and all three with good cause. "That was many years ago," he added; "they were drinking and letting drink interfere with their jobs." Neither management nor the labor unions tolerate

that fault. Needless to say the restaurant's reputation with the unions is good. The studio employment office handles the hiring, although Janios himself has requested that certain individuals be employed. His head chef, pantryman, and pastry chef all came with him to 20th; the head chef has worked with him for 26 years. Most of the staff has served the studio for several years, not less than a dozen of the waitresses and three of the cooks having been there when Nick Janios took over. The restaurant serves only the noon meal each day, but because of the training the waitresses have received and the reputation of their supervisor, they are able to hold down other jobs in fine Los Angeles restaurants during the dinner hours.

The entrees on the restaurant menu change daily, the other items weekly. "Some time you have to start over," says Nick Janios. "You can disguise the same dishes with new names for awhile, but pretty soon you're found out." So Nick's practice is to repeat the entrees about once a month. He maintains a file of menus from the best eating places across the country; he will add a new dish on one day, taking away a not-too-popular one on another. "No matter where you eat, if you eat there regularly, the food all begins to look alike. So you keep as much variety as you can, prepare it to the best of your ability, and make it as appealing as possible to the eye and to the palate. This is what we are here for in commissary." In all this Nick Janios and his staff have been eminently successful.

As we left the office and walked through the now empty restaurant, Nick walked along and told us about the colorful mural painting that covers every square foot of available space. A dozen men from the Art Department had got together at Nick's request and designed an extensive pictorial panorama of many of the nations of the world, along with a few film events of historical importance. "Right there, used to be Russia," he pointed out. "Today there's a new nation on the earth we didn't have space for. So Russia was painted out, and Israeli painted in. You have to pick and choose. By the door —," he led us across the room; "over by the door here was Italy. I didn't like what Italy was doing in the years of the war. So I said, why not my first homeland? So, today, there are the Dodecanese Islands — and there's Rhodes, because I wanted the Colossus of Rhodes. There he stands. And near him is my birthplace, Nissyros Island. That little place changed hands five times in 25 years."

Then we looked to our left, where a large reproduction of an official national emblem dominated the wall space. Nick Janios was smiling. It was the Great Seal of the United States of America.

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- NOT QUITE SUCH A GOOSE.** Gale. 1951 cutting from the play.75c
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GRAND GALS

(Continued from page 15)

during World War II in which Robert Taylor and Vivien Leigh played the leading roles. Miss Watson played the mother of Mr. Taylor and had a scene with Miss Leigh in which — knowing of her son's death in battle — she avoids mention of the topic. The two ladies had tea in a London restaurant and confined their remarks entirely to trivialities. It was a scene requiring great restraint and also great emotion. Miss Watson played the moment magnificently. Last season she appeared in *Ring Round the Moon*, Christopher Fry's adaptation of Jean Anouilh's *L'Invitation au Chateau*.

The art of drama adds to the enrichment of human experience and contributes to the highest of all the arts — the art of living.

Sam Boyd, Jr., Director of Drama,
W. Va. University

From a program of the University, welcoming
High School Thespians, March 10, 1951

One of the most remarkable of these grandes dames is Ethel Griffies. She is a real stage veteran. After many years in the English theatre Miss Griffies made her American debut in 1924 — on September 1st — in a play called *Havoc*. After many years in retirement she was coaxed back to the boards to appear in *Miss Liberty*, Irving Berlin's ode to the Statue of Liberty. She made a tremendous hit in this musical and has had very few idle moments since then. In John van Druten's *The Druid Circle*, she played the very wise mother of the desiccating professor. She has been seen too in *The Hallams*, Rose Franken's account of the later activities of the family first visited in *Another Language*. Last season she played the eldest trouper in George S. Kaufman's and Edna Ferber's spoof of the Barrymore clan, *The Royal Family*, at the City Center. Ethel Griffies is truly the senior member of this troupe of "Grand Gals."

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Magic" premiered at the intimate actors Colony Theater and proved to be a refreshing though madcap comedy."—*Los Angeles Times*. "Pink Magic" is well staged in a colorfully lighted Mexican decor. All in all, it provides a pleasant evening at the theater."—*Hollywood Citizen News*. "I attended a performance of PINK MAGIC and I want to tell you how much I enjoyed it. It was original and very refreshing. As one of my party said, 'it was like a breath of fresh air.'"—*Robert Mitchell*, Lincoln Junior High School, Santa Monica, Calif.

THE INNOCENTS

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those of the former caretaker and maid, both perverse, who had corrupted the souls of the innocents. In a final scene, which is a paroxysm of fear and terror, she learns that the two are now inseparable, the evil and the innocents. "In a lifetime of constant playgoing, I do not recall a single theatre-piece which held me as spellbound."—*Journal American*. "At last we have a horror play that adults can admire and enjoy."—*Times*. "An extraordinary experience . . . beautiful to watch."—*World-Telegram*.

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ACTING

(Continued from page 13)

After characters are fairly well-established, it may be necessary for a director to demand that his actors play in rehearsals at an energy level which is even higher than that eventually wanted in performance. This is one way of gradually building up a feeling for the higher metabolic rate of characters living in a theatrical world. Eventually the director can allow his actors to fall back to the energy level he wants in performance, and they will find they can then achieve such a level without any sense of strain. There must be no sense of strain. In the very best performances we have one of the many paradoxes of acting: the actors project strongly with a great deal of energy; at the same time they give the illusion that they do everything with ease or, at least, that they *could* play with even more power than they are playing, if it became necessary.

Communion

Again and again we see amateur actors who seem to feel it necessary to act only when they are speaking lines. This leads to a whole series of unfortunate results. Concentration is broken between each speech. The creation of

any genuine feeling becomes extremely unlikely. The character being portrayed disappears when not speaking. The play will have no variety of tempo, no rhythm and no sense of build toward climax, since each character's reactions come after instead of during previous speeches. And so on through a lengthy list. To sum up, this particular bad habit of amateur actors is disastrous to *any* sense of belief which the play as a whole may instill in the audience. Of course with real motivation and concentration actors cannot fall into the error of intermittent acting, but it occurs so frequently that some special consideration needs to be given to it.

Every amateur actor must be made aware that unless he acts every minute he is on the stage he is not doing his duty to himself, to his fellow-actors, to his audience, or to the play, and he has no right to be there at all. The effectiveness of any single actor's performance is almost as dependent upon how others onstage react to him as upon what he does himself. An audience comes to the theatre to observe and participate in the lives of a group of people who are in constant communion with one another through dialogue and action, thought and emotion. If the audience does not find this communion, it has been de-



One Foot in Heaven, presented by Thespian Troupe 25, Spanish Fork, Utah, High School, B. Davis Evans, Sponsor.

frauded. In one sense, a play is nothing more than a series of actions and reactions, and it can only be expressed through the unbroken interplay of these two.

First of all, the actor must master what has often been called "the art of listening" — that is, he must learn to listen with eagerness to everything that is said to him on the stage. He must be active in this listening, not passive. He must absorb, think, interpret, react every moment of the time. He is not just waiting for his next cue, but is trying to grasp the ideas and motivations of the person to whom he is talking. All of this listening will of course be modified by and filtered through the particular mannerisms and motivations of the character the actor is creating.

This is one of the places where mechanical pretense is at its least effective; the actor must be genuinely interested. If he is not interested, then he must add new details to his character, new imaginative background to the situation until he is interested. The blank eyes and mechanical nods of actors only pretending to listen, while their own thoughts are far away, will more quickly and neatly destroy the attention of an audience than almost anything else they can do. On the other hand, nothing will intensify and focus the attention of the audience so surely as the actors having a completely absorbing interest in the dialogue and action themselves.

Just as the actor must really listen, he must have a real desire to communicate when he speaks. He must speak to people, not at them. He is not just reciting memorized lines, but he is trying to express the thoughts that are in his mind as the character he is portray-

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and desperate, to take an overdose of sleeping pills. At this point, Lucifer, "rounder-upper" of lost souls, appears. Mr. Morlock begs for another chance; he sees the errors of his money-mad ways. He promises complete reform if . . . if . . . and Mildred, the maid, awakens him from the torment of his horrible dream. He is very much alive! And so is Luigi! And happiness comes to everyone! This happy, wholesome, lovable play can't miss. Audiences, casts, directors love it.

TEXAS: Miss Mary Frances Ball, Director of Dramatics, McLean Jr. High School, Ft. Worth, Texas, recently wrote us as follows: "Donald Payton writes, in my opinion, almost the only plays which are perfectly adapted to junior high school. Our audience loved 'Wilbur Saw It First' and so did I!"

WEST VIRGINIA: All our hats are off to this writer (Donald Payton) who really knows how to write an enjoyable teen-age play. We have presented all of his plays, for they are so successful and enjoyable. Please let me know when his next play is published.—Mrs. Johnson, Director of Dramatics, Bluefield, West Virginia.

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CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

ing. He must have a genuine desire to communicate something to, or to influence the actions of, the person he is addressing. He cannot be satisfied until he has aroused some response in the form of words, actions, or emotions in the person to whom he is speaking.

In addition, the actor must do his listening and speaking with spontaneity. He must give the impression that he has never heard or said these things before, though he may have heard and said them a hundred times before in rehearsal and previous performances. This "illusion of the first time," as it is often called, is an essential of every good production of a play.

Emotion

The natural impulse of an untrained actor is to attempt the creation of emotion for its own sake. At one point, for example, he knows he is supposed to be angry. He says to himself, "Here I must be angry," and he sets out to express anger. This seems to be a natural and simple process, but it results, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, in the worst kind of acting clichés. We get from it clenched fists, a rigid body, staring eyes, a loud voice, and all the other manifestations of forced tension. At its best, the patent falseness will result in embarrassment for the audience; at its worst the lack of believability will cause outright laughter.

Ideally every emotion in any particular role should grow out of imaginary belief in the situation and the character, and the character's reactions and motivations. It should be a natural growth from what-went-before, as in real life. Since no amateur actor is perfect, however, in concentration and motivation, this natural unfolding of emotion does not always take place, and when it does it is often inadequate. When the director insists that the actor never express more than he can feel (he must insist on this if the actor is to create belief), the actor frequently seems to express nothing at all.

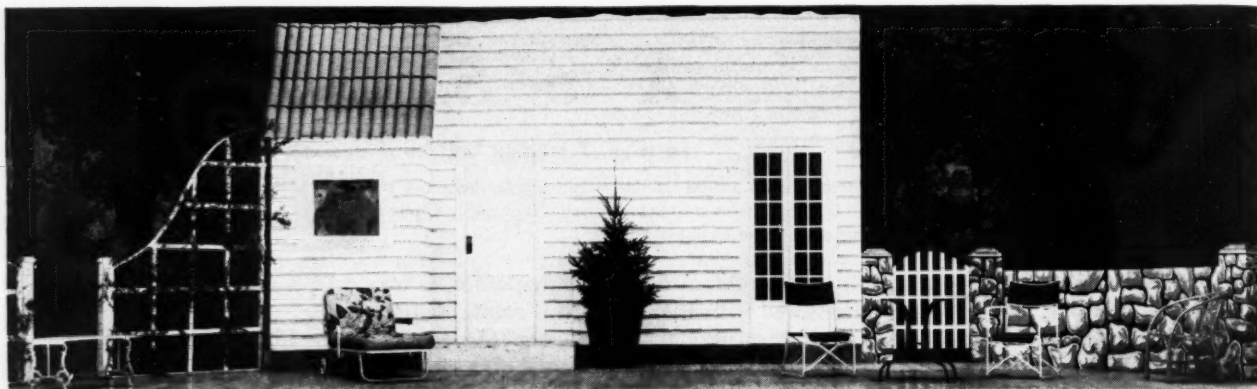
There are several ways in which actors can develop genuine emotion, and then intensify it after it has been achieved. One method that works for many actors is to put full concentration upon the physical action and the physical state of the character, justifying and making these believable at every step and by every means possible. The emotion will then grow of its own accord out of this firm basis of physical truth.

Another method for developing genuine feeling is through the use of emotion memory. The actor should practice reliving experiences of his own, trying in the process to recreate emotions he had at the time of the experience. He will usually find this easiest to do by building up the previous experience

through the sense-impressions involved in it. He will remember everything he saw and heard, everything he felt, tasted, or smelled in the most concrete detail of which his memory is capable. Out of this recreation of his sensory world the emotion of the experience should grow. This will help him to get the feeling of creating emotion and expressing it. During the rehearsal period then he should attempt to relate the experiences of his character to analogous experiences of his own from which he can transfer emotion, recreated through sensory detail, to the imaginary situations of the play.

Once some genuine feeling, appropriate to the character and situation, has been achieved, it can be intensified. The actor creates situations, not appearing in the play but appropriate to his character, and improvises on the basis of them to find possible new and deepened responses for the character. Or the actor may add new imaginary details and stronger motivations to his character within the situations of the play so that more intense feeling becomes natural under the given circumstances.

After he once realizes its absolute necessity, almost every actor can develop further methods of his own for building up that genuine feeling which is essential to his own belief and that of the audience.



Set of **Home Sweet Homicide**, with a concrete block foundation and live cedar trees.
Willis High School (Thespian Troupe 420), Delaware, Ohio, Kathryn Hearn, Director.

GRADUATION

(Continued from page 11)

But these courses are hardly an indication of what will result.

Many colleges and universities have national and international reputations for being established theatre training centers. What most students do not know is that some of these institutions are living on the reputation acquired a generation ago, resting on their laurels while their actual present day standards and achievements indicate that they have succumbed to the careless ways of average theatre.

The truth is that every established theatre institution has its skeleton in the wings. From inquiry and word of mouth, from graduates and post-graduates, from seeing the results of various schools both in the personnel they produce and the productions on their stages, I have discovered that there is no Drama school that can be recommended without some reservations.

Frequently favoritism plays a too prominent role. If you are liked, you will do well; if you are not liked, you will not have a chance. One may find only two or possibly three members of the faculty who have something of value to contribute to one's theatrical development. I even know of cases where the few excellent directors and teachers are being pushed into the background and out of the department by others who are envious of their ability or popularity. But that is only human nature and the usual practice in all ways of life. The run-of-the-mill always resent those who would rise above them.

Often one finds oneself at the mercy of an "educator" who has some weird idea about theatre. One of the leading schools in the country asserts that theatre is intellectual recreation. Nothing could be more ridiculous. Then too there are those little theatrical gods who storm and rave at their students filling them with their points of view and never allowing another opinion.

During my own searchings I have gone to qualified sources asking about this school and that. I have been told

that this university has a strange method of teaching acting; another has no special training in speech or interpretation; another has no designing requirements; still another discredits the whole department. This is probably professional jealousy, but we are dealing with the human equation.

A dismal picture? Yes! Where then is the solution? *It lies within the individual.* It lies within the hopeful's sense of inner honesty; it depends upon his analysis of himself. Since the true theatre man, like any other worthy craftsman, is born, he rather naturally follows a gifted sense of theatrical integrity. He senses what to take and what to leave alone. Unfortunately the majority of young students lack the perceptiveness required in this negative educational dilemma.*

How then can he, prepare for a career? The first vital move depends upon the prospective theatre hopeful. Will he be honest with himself? Will he measure his own theatrical potential? Once having done so, once having agreed that he is going into theatre to make a living, of course, but more because it is to be his life and

*The Teacher-Director of Dramatic Art, Bulletin of N.A.S.S.P., March, 1950, / See M. David Samples — Irvine N. Smith.

love, the work for which he was born, having admitted the odds against him, now he may gather up the wordy catalogues before him and ponder. As one must be skeptical of all printed matter, *even this article*, the catalogue can serve only as a means of viewing the nature and comprehensiveness of the theatre program offered at any given school.

A visit to the school is imperative. By all means see as many of the plays presented by that school as possible. Read the books written by members of the staff. See what their philosophies are. Question as much as possible. Find out all you can about those in command and the reputation of the school in theatrical circles. For a personal recommendation from one school may mean a great deal, while that of another is valueless. Consider the postgraduate influence of the department. Will the school help you find a job—a theatre job? Has it connections and influence in the world of drama?

If you wish to specialize, be sure the school you choose permits concentration in the theatre phase you desire to follow. But beware! The best theatre man is the one thoroughly trained and competent in various departments of theatre.

Once enrolled be constantly alert. Allow no one to twist your outlook or color your ideals. Keep an open mind, take everything in freely, weigh, integrate, draw your own conclusions. Let no one bind you mentally or physically; let no one infringe upon your integrity! Supplement your routine work by private study; eat, sleep, breathe theatre. You will never learn enough, so the sooner you are ready to start the better.

I have advised you sincerely from my first hand experiences. I believe honesty is imperative in so vital an issue as this choosing a life work. One must try to present the whole truth. This is not merely theatrical banter, the exchange of ways or means to theatrical careers. This involves human success or failure. While honesty may, at first, be painful, it may save some wide-eyed teen-age hopeful from disillusionment. If so, it will have served its purpose.

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COME TO THE THEATRE

(Continued from page 9)

task is to reach the student who has no special interest in the theatre and who has no desire to take a course in the dramatics department. Our procedure is a simple, straightforward one: We make a written report on a theatrical performance of straight dramatic nature part of the required course work. (Exception must be made for the small number of students who cannot attend the theatre for religious reasons.) Yet, requiring a report is merely a form of academic duress. How can we talk the students into wanting to see a play? I shall not describe in detail our procedure because, as I know well, what works for one school does not work for another.

The dramatic experience of most high school students, I suppose, is confined pretty much to the motion picture. Since movie houses are as common as filling stations throughout the country, the teacher, if he is not a snob, does have something with which to begin. Most teachers of English in the high school are interested in showing the student that the serious dramatic writer is an interpreter of his age. What is better than to begin by talking about the movies? Movies, from the art of *The Bicycle Thief* to the canned entertainment of the Esther Williams-Van John-

son picture, give one a view of an age. It is encouraging too to note at least a trickle of interest when a motion picture is mentioned in class. I am aware of course that the motion picture and the straight drama are different media. Yet they are alive in that they bring a story to life. The student who has read the novel on which a picture is based is aware of this. Here is one place to begin. Cannot the teacher merely discuss



A scene from *The Happy Journey*, as presented by Rock Springs, Wyo., High School (Thespian Troupe 248), Don Hehner, Sponsor.

a recent movie in terms of the glimpse it gives into the life of our time?

The teacher can safely make one more presumption in beginning a unit of study of this kind: Many students have read a play. The problem in the classroom is to make the point, somehow or other, that the play itself is the thing, not just the reading of the text. After all, drama means action, and action must be seen. Last year, by a lucky coincidence, one of the university theatre groups in Chicago did a performance of *King Lear* a short time after our students had read the play in class. (In our course we require our students to read two modern plays in addition to *King Lear* and the *Agamemnon*.) The instructors encouraged the students to see the performance; they promised that the play would come to exciting life. The school authorities allowed the treasurer's office to handle ticket sales for performances. From the students who were curious enough to go the response was most interesting. *King Lear* for them had become an exciting, powerful drama. They discovered that a play by Shakespeare, when taken from the footnote-loaded page of an unattractive book and acted out, is an unforgettable experience. This is something that the few students lucky enough to do a part in a Shakespearean play soon discover. One performance convinced these students, few of whom have special interest in the stage, that Shakespeare is not worthy interest only for stodgy misfits in our atomic age.

Yet at this point another consideration arises. Although in itself theatrical experience is good, it is the kind of experience that becomes intense with sophistication. Making use of community theatre resources means preparing the student to see plays. After all, a cricket match is dull and meaningless to most Americans, while, on the other hand, a baseball game is equally dull to the average Englishman. The spectator must

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know what to look for if he is to enjoy either game. The parallel of course is only roughly exact, since the movement and dialogue of the stage have an immediate appeal that the foreign game does not. Our problem in handling drama is to make the student aware of the elements and combinations of elements that are distinctive of the drama. This is admittedly an ambitious undertaking.

At Wright we try to deal with this problem by inviting a member of the Drama Department to come into the Humanities general course to talk to the students about seeing a play. This instructor, equipped with specialized knowledge, tells the students about such things as stage sets, properties, costumes, lighting and the like. He tries above all to impress the students that the play and all that goes with it must not necessarily be recognizably "real." The stage is one thing; real life is another. At times it is enough for the stage merely to suggest. The stage cannot and need not match the resources of the movie studio. Obviously if the student knows something about the elements that go into a play, his enjoyment of the play will be increased and his critical faculties will begin to develop—a kind of development devoutly to be desired in this age of mass entertainment. At least as a result of this instruction the student will see that more than the text goes into the production of a play.

It goes without saying that the teacher of English without special dramatic training can handle this preparation. After all, we are dealing with future spectators (we hope) rather than with actors or technicians. It is not difficult to point to the purely theatrical effects in a play by Eugene O'Neill. In any event, in the classrooms we always talk about such things as the dramatist's method of characterization. We can point out how not just the lines, but the voice, diction, dress, the characteristic gestures and the movements of the actors build the character. This is preparing the student for the theatre. The

ideal is to have the student see performed a play he has read in the classroom.

The teacher will want to point to as many elements as he thinks wise and educationally sound. He may want to discuss movements in the theatre: Naturalism, expressionism and so on. He will want the students to see that these moments reflect the spirit of an age. When talking about the spirit of an age, we hit upon the most important aspect of preparing students for the theatre. If the theatre is worth bothering about, it is so because it is a force that mirrors the flavor and spirit of an age. If the theatre is merely an entertainment medium, we need not expend energy persuading students to become acquainted with it. The movies, the radio, and now television are readily accessible if entertainment is all the student should seek. We want to show the student that the theatre is a serious art form with high entertainment value, worthy of his attention as a thinking citizen.

The student, to recognize the drama as the mirror of an age, must not remain a passive spectator. He must think about what he sees. For that reason in our course at Wright we require that students submit a written report on the play they have seen. In the classroom we make suggestions about character, staging, sets and the like; we urge the student to express what can be called for lack of a better name his personal reaction. Was the student able to iden-

tify himself with any of the characters? For which characters did he feel sympathy? Is the conflict in the play genuine? Does the play have any relevance to life as the student knows it? It may be noted too that since we require students to see a play, we are compelled through bulletin boards, etc., to keep our students aware of theatrical activity in the community.

Recently in Chicago we were lucky enough to have running such plays as *Death of a Salesman* and *The Madwoman of Chaillot*. Luckily too the first ran during one semester, the second during the succeeding. Most of the students taking the course during these two semesters selected these two fine plays. Whether this was so because of newspaper reports or because of the mild coercion of the instructor, I cannot say. The reports were quite interesting. Willie Loman appeared to most of the students as a symbol and symptom of a powerful aspect of American life. Most students were aware of the message of the *Madwoman*, although some were distracted by the fantasy. If space permitted, it would be interesting to examine some student comment.

The remarks made above are rambling, I am aware. The kind of preparation hinted at, however, is gratifying in its results. What needs to be done is to pool community and school resources. If theatrical experience is desirable for students, it is up to the teacher to bring students to the theatre.

KNEE DEEP IN TROUBLE

Comedy

By Bettye Knapp

6 men — 8 women

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The Burton family have never "grown up." They've depended on Mrs. Burton to polish shoes, wash socks, pick up discarded clothes and do most of their thinking for them. So the afternoon that Violet wraps the car around a telephone pole, giving her mother a fractured skull, is indeed a fateful one. The Burtons are left floundering like so many minnows out of water. That is, except Violet, who escaped the accident without a scratch and decides she must have been destined to do some good in the world. She begins her campaign immediately by misinterpreting Mrs. Lester's kindness to her father as a secret love affair, and from then on her motives are wholly unselfish. Even with the encouragement of Annabelle's tea readings, she can't take time out to really concentrate on Dr. Marshall. Andy plans to marry Peggy just to get out of the family's hair, and Jerry is rapidly falling into the family path of least resistance. Mr. Burton plugs along for Mr. Greenmore, afraid to venture out on his own, and Violet is letting her life be planned for her by Annabelle's tea leaves. Then Cousin Myrna steps in. Efficient, truthful Cousin Myrna is kept busy picking up after the family, and sticking her neck out to give Mr. Burton a little sound advice. Just when Annabelle and Violet are knee-deep in tea leaves planning ways of getting Dr. Marshall to propose, Jerry crushes Violet with the news that he caught Myrna and the doctor "necking." Of course Violet rises above everything and decides the next best thing is to be a nurse. Andy and his father go into business for themselves, and Jerry, taunted throughout by Annabelle and her "vibrations" also strikes out for independence by bringing his old socks out of hiding and doing the laundry himself.

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BRIEF VIEWS

DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE New York City

Second Threshold, a play in two acts (four scenes) by Philip Barry with revisions by Robert E. Sherwood; 4 m., 2 f.; the library of Josiah Bolton's house in New York City. This play was not written nor revised with the high school market in mind, but some Thespian sponsor ought to take his courage in both hands and give six ambitious and intelligent students a chance to get their teeth into something. The New York production has but recently closed; it is very improbable that Hollywood will be interested. But there should be an audience in many communities for the story of a brilliant, successful politico-businessman, for whom life no longer holds any appeal and who is seeking a way to commit suicide in a manner not too obvious. His wife has left him many years before, but he still has a wonderful daughter, who is about to throw herself away on a man too old for her, and a wayward son. How Josiah Bolton is induced to make a fight, how Miranda resolves her problem, how Jock discovers his real feeling for his father—these make first class drama. And the dialogue, in the well-remembered Barry vein, is witty, literate and always to the point. It's well worth a try.

THE NORTHWESTERN PRESS Minneapolis, Minnesota

Easy Arena Plays by Louis J. Huber. This little volume is chiefly notable as being one of the first collections available of short plays especially written for arena, or "in-the-round" presentation. All the seventeen playlets have been written, we are assured, with this type of production in mind. Some are better than others, all of them are worth reading, none calls for more than five players. Some are quite short, three minutes or so in length, and the longest appears to be no more than a ten-minute experience for the audience. We liked the sentiment of *Mother Remembers* (for three women) and the comedy twist in *The New Secretary* (four men), while *Let's Haunt* offers possibilities in the way of a fake-spook play.

SAMUEL FRENCH New York and Hollywood

A History of the American Theatre by Glenn Hughes. 562 pp. Illus. The industry, to say nothing of the erudition of Professor Hughes continues to excite the wonder of his less industrious colleagues. His latest contribution is a monumental piece of work, stimulating, scholarly, yet most readable. He covers the period 1700 to 1950 in great detail, tracing the growth of the drama in America from its origins in hamlets and small cities, up to what he very aptly calls "the fight for survival" of the past ten years. There is an excellent and complete index of plays, players and principal theatres, and some penetrating observations on trends and future developments. It is an invaluable reference work for all theatre practitioners.

The Terrible Turners, comedy in three acts, by George Batson; 7 m., 7 f.; living room of the Turner home. Mistaken identity is the basis for the farcical goings-on, and Mr. Turner's boss, expected from out-of-town with good news about a promotion, is mistaken for a potent movie producer. The fourteen-year-old daughter who makes the bloomer further contrives to get the unfortunate tycoon entangled

By TALBOT PEARSON

with her aunt, addicted to attendance at funerals, including that of an underworld figure of some notoriety. Somehow or other an art critic lacking a sense of humor enters the melee and some other confusing happenings occur. There is a rousing bit of excitement to bring down the second act curtain, and then things, as may be expected, get themselves sorted out for the finish. All this mainly involves characters older than in the usual high school play, but they will not be difficult. Played fast and furiously it should be very acceptable.

Sky High, a comedy in 3 acts, by Florence Ryerson and Alice D. G. Miller. This is a boisterous, fast-moving piece for 9 boys and 5 girls, laid in a skiing lodge, *Sky High*. The party, about to break up after spending Christmas holidays at the resort, is marooned there by the caving in of a tunnel. Their efforts to make the best of it are disturbed by the discovery that the place is headquarters for as dastardly a bunch of spies as ever slipped through the FBI net. Dangers follow in succession; first one of the party, then another, rises to the occasion to escape or to outwit the subversives. All very thrilling, spine-chilling and relieved by plenty of humor. A simple setting will do for the lodge and the subject is topical enough to ensure audience attention for a long time to come. Highly recommended.

Goodbye, My Fancy, comedy in 3 acts, by Fay Kanin. Madelaine Carroll played the liberal Congresswoman in this play about a Commencement weekend at a girls' College in Massachusetts. Agatha Reed has made a name for herself as a crusading war correspondent and is to be honored by her old school by the award of an honorary degree. She hopes to show the graduates a movie which pulls no punches about the horrors of war. The trustees object. The president, whom Agatha recalls as a romantic figure (she has loved him for years), is exhibited as a craven, spineless figure and her disillusion makes the magazine photographer, on hand for the great event, the more desirable and genuine. There's a happy ending after many tribulations and some good, stout commonsense in the dialogue.

The play needs some actors capable of realizing the characterization of some middle-aged college instructors and administrators, but there are easier parts for ten or more girl-graduates, plus the prize plum of Miss Carroll's own role. One set, no tricky production effects beyond some interesting sound cues. Some cutting may be necessary for high school production.

WALTER H. BAKER CO. Boston, Massachusetts

The Diary of Sarah Sears, a play in three acts by Robert St. Clair. Interior. Sarah is a spinster of 38, hard, disillusioned and grim. But she has a niece staying with her, romantically involved with a boy of her own age. Sarah gives the affair no encouragement and the heartbroken niece cannot understand her aunt's barren outlook on life. Sarah has a brother who comes across his sister's girlhood diary and in a flashback the audience is shown the reasons for the bitterness. An eighteen-year-old tragedy is revealed, ample justification for Sarah's misanthropy, but the timely arrival of "A Stranger" restores her faith in mankind. The play has a lot of charm, is well written and presents no production problems.

Family Heirloom (Four women) and *A Date With a Theme* (Five women) are two one-act plays recommended. In the first all the characters are mature, two of them elderly; the

NEW FILMS

Reviewed by Blandford Jennings

International Film Bureau, Inc., 6 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 2, Ill., has recently made seven 11-minute films, in 16mm. sound, designed to be of help to directors, actors, and technicians. The films are available for purchase or rental. Their action is integrated around the rehearsal and production of a scene from a play about Tom Sawyer, and is presented by staff and students at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, under the direction of Mr. Gnesin.

Particularly commendable are two color films on make-up for boys and girls respectively. These show both juvenile and character make-up in the process of being applied by the actor. They provide more practical guidance in their combined 22 minutes than would many pages of any book on the subject.

Two films are titled *Directing a Play* and *Acting Problems*. They should be used to supplement one another, since singly they might be misleading. Actually, the one about acting problems shows the director in action far more than does the one about directing, and includes, incidentally, an exposition of the method of fixing a characterization by impromptu pantomime that deserves the study and imitation of any director dealing with inexperienced actors.

The two films *Designing a Set* and *Building a Set* display sound and efficient methods. This material, however, has fewer advantages over a textbook presentation than does that on make-up and acting. The final film has to do with "front of the house" management.

The entire series would be of service primarily (a) to the director of little experience to whom expert guidance is not easily available, and (b) to any school or community dramatics organization as an adjunct to the training of its new personnel.

second has only one, a teacher, older than high school age. Good plots and sensible writing in both.

Campus Brides (Five men, four women) recalls the G. I. Bill of Rights and deals with the trouble that a warmhearted secretary in the Dean's office can stir up when she tries to help the football team make passing grades. All three of these short plays are well worthwhile.

The Stratosphere Minstrels, a complete, fast moving, up and going minstrel show by Arthur L. Kaser; no royalty. The adjectives are the publishers', not this reviewer's, but for once they would appear justified. It is a capably written, funny book for a group of boys who will need very little beyond burnt cork to make it go. *The Stratosphere* is rather dragged in, but it serves to set the scene. The gags come fast and furiously. The show is divided into three parts: first, olio, and after-piece—and there is enough material for as many as fifty performers, if need be.

Tea for Three, a play in one act by Margery Vosper. Adapted from Agatha Christie's short thriller, *Accident*, this has parts for two men, two women. It's really a short short, but a great deal happens and all very exciting. There is a surprise ending.

Making the Jest of It! A Baker's Dozen, by Miriam Uni. Despite the bad pun in the title this is a useful little batch of monologues for a female performer. They have the virtue of brevity, of literate writing and contain just the necessary amount of humorous exaggeration to make them effective. Very good if you like this kind of thing; good practice even if you don't.